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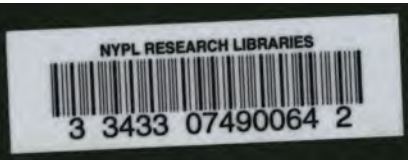
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THE

BRITISH THEATRE.

THE

BRITISH THEATRE;

OR,

A COLLECTION OF PLAYS,

WHICH ARE ACTED AT

THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY-LANE, COVENT GARDEN, AND HAYMARKET.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOKS.

WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL REMARKS,

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

IN TWENTY-FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. VII.

ISABELLA.
OROONOKO.
DISTRESSED MOTHER.
ZARA.
GUSTAVUS VASA.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1808.

WILLIAM SAVAGE, PRINTER,
BEDFORD BURY.

ISABELLA

VILLAGE HATTOM DISTRACTED TOOL SIRON ALIVE

ACT V. SCENE IV.

Painted by S. Woodforde *Published by Longman & C. March 1st* *Engraved by C. Heath*

ISABELLA;

OR,

THE FATAL MARRIAGE;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

BY

THOMAS SOUTHERN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

SAVAGE AND EASINGWOOD,
PRINTERS, LONDON.

REMARKS.

Southern, the author of this tragedy, was born in Dublin, in the year of the restoration, and received his education at the university there. He then came to England, and entered himself in the Middle Temple, as student of the law: but he neglected this study for the fame of writing plays, and soon after, wholly relinquished it for the adventures of the army. He was patronized by James the Second, when Duke of York, and served under that monarch, as captain, against the Duke of Monmouth.

Dryden being asked, whose genius, as a poet, Southern resembled, compared him to Otway. Every reader will own the comparison just, for they have both unbounded force in the description of poignant grief.

The present drama, independent of its own worth, will be ever memorable for having introduced to the admiration of a London audience,—Mrs. Siddons.

Who will allege, that mental powers have no charm in the female sex? Mrs. Siddons performed on the London stage, in the prime of youth and bloom of beauty, yet was totally neglected. She came a few years after, with judgment for her aid, and was enthusiastically worshipped.

Woe, bitterest woe, must be gracefully imitated in the just performance of Isabella: but of such imitation, and of all those delightful sensations, which arise

from beholding fictitious sorrow, the audience of the metropolis had been for many years deprived, by the want of skilful tragedians, when she appeared,—she enchanted all the town by her "well painted passion," and established in the dramatic world, the long lost prerogative of sighs and tears.

The characters which surround Isabella, are merely placed there by the author, to give effect to all she says and does. Insignificant as those personages are in themselves, they produce with her so happy a combination, that a most powerful tragedy is the result of their joint services.

Beyond the deepest pain, felt by an audience for Isabella's grief, there is a pang almost insupportable, which proceeds from her gratitude. The author has in no part of the tragedy more effectually wrung the hearts of those, who possess nice sensibility, than where this poor widow is overcome by kindness, to render herself additionally wretched, rather than be ungrateful.

"This generosity will ruin me."—"I am contented to be miserable, but not this way." These are sentences more pathetic to those, who feel acutely the weight of obligations, than any she pronounces.

Those very auditors are equally vivid in their sensations towards her faults, as her virtues; and shrink from the unjustifiable manner with which she treats men who come to demand their right; calling them "rav'ning bloodhounds." A character, only half as amiable as the author meant her to appear, could not conduct herself towards her creditors, but with the most profound respect. Indeed was Isabella

largely indebted to any one amongst these men, and had not the means of payment,—moral argument, perhaps, could prove, she was bound as much in honour to marry *him* for value received, as to marry Villeroy.

This play is censured by some critics for its comic scenes;—the tragic are so much superior, they want more of the last, and none of the first. But, more of Isabella, exquisite as she is, might cause satiety. The author in his work has given variety, and that variegated scene which nature gives.

Southern wrote no less than ten plays; of which, only this tragedy, and his Oroonoko, are remembered to the author's reputation.

He lived to the age of eighty-eight, and passed his latter days in retired serenity, having acquired, by his industry and strict economy, a considerable fortune. He was the first who increased the advantage of dramatic authors, by obtaining, in addition to the first, a second and third night for their emolument. He also raised the price of prologues, having given seven guineas to Dryden, on his demand of that sum, for a prologue, which, till then, had only been rated at five*. These occurrences gave occasion to the following lines of Pope:

" ——Southern, born to raise,
The price of prologues and of plays."

* Johnson says only three. Cibber says seven was given. It has been thought proper here, to name the most dignified sum.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COUNT BALDWIN	*Mr. Murray.*
BIRON	*Mr. Kemble.*
BIRON'S SON	*Miss Shotter.*
CARLOS	*Mr. C. Kemble.*
VILEROY	*Mr. Brunton.*
MAURICE	*Mr. Field.*
EGMONT	
BELFORD	*Mr. Claremont.*
GENTLEMEN	*Messrs. Sarjant, &c.*
OFFICER	*Mr. Atkins.*
SAMPSON	*Mr. Emery.*
SANCHO	*Mr. Truman.*
JUAN	*Mr. Wilde.*
TIPSTAVES	*Messrs. Street and Lewis.*
BRAVOS	*Messrs. King, Dubois, L. Bologna, &c.*
ISABELLA	*Mrs. Siddons.*
LADIES	*Mesdames Bologna, &c.*
NURSE	*Mrs. Davenport.*

OFFICERS, SERVANTS, MEN and WOMEN.

SCENE,—Brussels.

ISABELLA.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

Street.

Enter VILLEROY *and* CARLOS.

Car. This constancy of yours, will establish an immortal reputation among the women.

Vil. If it would establish me with Isabella——

Car. Follow her, follow her: Troy town was won at last.

Vil. I have follow'd her these seven years, and now but live in hopes.

Car. But live in hopes! Why, hope is the ready road, the lover's baiting place; and for aught you know, but one stage short of the possession of your mistress.

Vil. But my hopes, I fear, are more of my own making than her's; and proceed rather from my wishes, than any encouragement she has given me.

Car. That I can't tell: the sex is very various: there are no certain measures to be prescribed or followed, in making our approaches to the women. All that we have to do, I think, is to attempt them in the weakest part. Press them but hard, and they will all fall under the necessity of a surrender at last. That

favour comes at once; and sometimes when we least expect it.

Vil. I'm going to visit her.

Car. What interest a brother-in-law can have with her depend upon.

Vil. I know your interest, and I thank you.

Car. You are prevented; see the mourner comes:
She weeps, as seven years were seven hours;
So fresh, unfading, is the memory
Of my poor brother's, Biron's, death:
I leave you to your opportunity. [*Exit* VILLEROY.
Though I have taken care to root her from our house,
I would transplant her into Villeroy's——
There is an evil fate that waits upon her,
To which I wish him wedded—only him:
His upstart family, with haughty brow,
(Though Villeroy and myself are seeming friends)
Looks down upon our house; his sister too,
Whose hand I ask'd, and was with scorn refus'd,
Lives in my breast, and fires me to revenge.——
They bend this way.——
Perhaps, at last, she seeks my father's doors;
They shall be shut, and he prepar'd to give.
The beggar and her brat a cold reception.
That boy's an adder in my path—they come,
I'll stand apart, and watch their motions. [*Exit.*

Enter VILLEROY *and* ISABELLA, *with her Child.*

Isa. Why do you follow me? you know I am
A bankrupt every way; too far engag'd
Ever to make return: I own you have been
More than a brother to me, my friend:
And at a time when friends are found no more,
A friend to my misfortunes.

Vil. I must be
Always your friend.

Isa. I have known, and found you

Truly my friend: and would I could be yours;
But the unfortunate cannot be friends:
Pray be gone,
Take warning, and be happy.
Vil. Happiness!
There's none for me without you.——
What serve the goods of fortune for? To raise
My hopes, that you at last will share them with me.
Isa. I must not hear you.
Vil. Thus, at this awful distance, I have serv'd
A seven years' bondage—Do I call it bondage,
When I can never wish to be redeem'd?
No, let me rather linger out a life
Of expectation, that you may be mine,
Than be restor'd to the indifference
Of seeing you, without this pleasing pain:
I've lost myself, and never would be found,
But in these arms.
Isa. Oh, I have heard all this!
——But must no more——the charmer is no more:
My buried husband rises in the face
Of my dear boy, and chides me for my stay:
Canst thou forgive me, child?
Vil. What can I say!
The arguments that make against my hopes
Prevail upon my heart, and fix me more;
Those pious tears, you hourly throw away
Upon the grave, have all their quick'ning charms,
And more engage my love, to make you mine:
When yet a virgin, free, and undispos'd,
I lov'd, but saw you only with mine eyes;
I could not reach the beauties of your soul:
I have since liv'd in contemplation,
And long experience, of your growing goodness:
What then was passion, is my judgment now,
Through all the several changes of your life,
Confirm'd and settled in adoring you.

Isa. Nay, then I must be gone. If you are my friend,
If you regard my little interest,
No more of this.
I'm going to my father; he needs not an excuse
To use me ill: pray leave me to the trial.
Vil. I'm only born to be what you would have me,
The creature of your power, and must obey;
In every thing obey you. I am going:
But all good fortune go along with you. [*Exit.*
Isa. I shall need all your wishes—— [*Knocks.*
Lock'd! and fast!
Where is the charity that us'd to stand
In our forefathers' hospitable days
At great men's doors,
Like the good angel of the family,
With open arms taking the needy in,
To feed and clothe, to comfort and relieve them?
Now even their gates are shut against their poor.
[*She knocks again.*

Enter SAMPSON.

Samp. Well, what's to do now, I trow? You knock as loud as if you were invited; and that's more than I heard of; but I can tell you, you may look twice about you for a welcome in a great man's family, before you find it, unless you bring it along with you.

Isa. I hope I do, sir.
Is your lord at home?

Samp. My lord at home!

Isa. Count Baldwin lives here still?

Samp. Ay, ay, Count Baldwin does live here; and I am his porter; but what's that to the purpose, good woman, of my lord's being at home?

Isa. Why, don't you know me, friend?

Samp. Not I, not I, mistress; I may have seen you

before, or so; but men of employment must forget their acquaintance; especially such as we are never to be the better for. [*Going to shut the door.*

Enter NURSE.

Nurse. Handsomer words would become you, and mend your manners, Sampson: do you know who you prate to?

Isa. I am glad you know me, Nurse.

Nurse. Marry, Heav'n forbid, madam, that I should ever forget you, or my little jewel: pray go in [ISABELLA *goes in with her Child.*] Now my blessing go along with you, wherever you go, or whatever you are about. Fie, Sampson, how couldst thou be such a saracen? A Turk would have been a better christian, than to have done so barbarously by so good a lady.

Samp. Why look you, Nurse, I know you of old: by your good will, you would have a finger in every body's pye, but mark the end on't; if I am called to account about it, I know what I have to say.

Nurse. Marry come up here; say your pleasure, and spare not. Refuse his eldest son's widow and poor child, the comfort of seeing him? She does not trouble him so often.

Samp. Not that I am against it, Nurse, but we are but servants, you know. we must have no likings, but our lord's, and must do as we are ordered. But what is the business, Nurse? You have been in the family before I came into the world: what's the reason, pray, that this daughter-in-law, who has so good a report in every body's mouth, is so little set by, by my lord?

Nurse. Why, I tell you, Sampson, more or less: I'll tell the truth, that's my way, you know, without adding or diminishing.

Samp. Ay, marry, Nurse.

Nurse. My lord's eldest son, Biron by name, the son of his bosom, and the son that he would have lov'd *best, if he had* as many as king Pyramus of

Troy. This Biron, as I was saying, was a lovely sweet gentleman, and indeed, nobody could blame his father for loving him: he was a son for the king of Spain; Heaven bless him, for I was his nurse. But now I come to the point, Sampson; this Biron, without asking the advice of his friends, hand over head, as young men will have their vagaries, not having the fear of his father before his eyes, as I may say, wilfully marries this Isabella.

Samp. How, wilfully! he should have had her consent, methinks.

Nurse. No, wilfully marries her; and which was worse, after she had settled all her fortune upon a nunnery, which she broke out of to run away with him. They say they had the church's forgiveness, but I had rather it had been his father's.

Samp. Why, in good truth, and I think our young master was not in the wrong but in marrying without a portion.

Nurse. That was the quarrel, I believe, Sampson: upon this, my old lord would never see him: disinherited him; took his younger brother, Carlos, into favour, whom he never cared for before; and, at last, forced Biron to go to the siege of Candy, where he was killed.

Samp. Alack a-day, poor gentleman.

Nurse. For which my old lord hates her, as if she had been the cause of his going thither.

Samp. Alas, poor lady! she has suffered for it; she has lived a great while a widow.

Nurse. A great while indeed, for a young woman, Sampson.

Samp. Gad so! here they come; I won't venture to be seen. [*They retire.*

Enter COUNT BALDWIN, *followed by* ISABELLA *and her Child.*

C. Bald. Whoever of your friends directed you, *Misguided,* and abus'd you——There's your way:

What could you expect from me?
Isa. Oh, I have nothing to expect on earth!
But misery is very apt to talk:
I thought I might be heard.
C. Bald. What can you say?
Is there in eloquence, can there be in words
A reparation of the injuries,
The great calamities, that you have brought
On me, and mine? You have destroy'd those hopes
I fondly rais'd, through my declining life,
To rest my age upon; and most undone me.
Isa. I have undone myself too.
C. Bald. Speak it again;
Say still you are undone; and I will hear you,
With pleasure hear you.
Isa. Would my ruin please you?
C. Bald. Beyond all other pleasures.
Isa. Then you are pleas'd—for I am most undone,
C. Bald. I pray'd but for revenge, and Heav'n has heard,
And sent it to my wishes: these grey hairs
Would have gone down in sorrow to the grave,
Which you have dug for me, without the thought,
The thought of leaving you more wretched here.
Isa. Indeed I am most wretched—
I lost with Biron all the joys of life:
But now its last supporting means are gone.
All the kind helps that Heav'n in pity rais'd,
In charitable pity to our wants,
At last have left us: now bereft of all,
But this last trial of a cruel father,
To save us both from sinking. Oh, my child!
Kneel with me, knock at nature in his heart:
Let the resemblance of a once lov'd son
Speak in this little one, who never wrong'd you,
And plead the fatherless and widow's cause.

Oh, if you ever hope to be forgiven,
Forget our faults, that Heaven may pardon yours!
C. Bald. How dare you mention Heav'n! Call to mind
Your perjur'd vows; your plighted, broken faith
To Heav'n, and all things holy; were you not
Devoted, wedded to a life recluse,
The sacred habit on, profess'd and sworn,
A votary for ever? Can you think
The sacrilegious wretch, that robs the shrine,
Is thunder proof?
Isa. There, there, began my woes.
Oh! had I never seen my Biron's face,
Had he not tempted me, I had not fall'n,
But still continued innocent and free
Of a bad world, which only he had pow'r
To reconcile, and make me try again.
C. Bald. Your own inconstancy,
Reconcil'd you to the world:
He had no hand to bring you back again,
But what you gave him. Circe, you prevail'd
Upon his honest mind, transforming him
From virtue, and himself, into what shapes
You had occasion for; and what he did
Was first inspir'd by you.
Isa. Not for myself—for I am past the hopes
Of being heard—but for this innocent——
And then I never will disturb you more.
C. Bald. I almost pity the unhappy child:
But being yours——
Isa. Look on him as your son's;
And let his part in him answer for mine.
Oh, save, defend him, save him from the wrongs
That fall upon the poor!
C. Bald. It touches me——
And I will save him—But to keep him safe,
Never come near him more.

Isa. What! take him from me!
No, we must never part.
I live but in my child.
No, let me pray in vain, and beg my bread
From door to door, to feed his daily wants,
Rather than always lose him.

C. Bald. Then have your child, and feed him with your prayer.

Isa. Then Heaven have mercy on me!
[*Exit, with Child.*

C. Bald. You rascal, slave, what do I keep you for?
How came this woman in?

Samp. Why, indeed, my lord, I did as good as tell her before, my thoughts upon the matter——

C. Bald. Did you so, sir? Now then tell her mine;
Tell her I sent you to her.
Begone, go all together—I shall be glad to hear of you: but never, never see me more—
[*He drives them off before him.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

The Street.

Enter VILLEROY *and* CARLOS, *meeting.*

Vil. My friend, I fear to ask—but Isabella——
The lovely widow's tears, her orphan's cries,
Thy father must feel for them——No, I read,
I read their cold reception in thine eyes——
Thou pitiest them—though Baldwin—but I spare him

For Carlos' sake; thou art no son of his.
There needs not this to endear thee more to me.
[*Embrace.*

Car. My Villeroy, the fatherless, the widow,
Are terms not understood within these gates——
You must forgive him; sir, he thinks this woman
Is Biron's fate, that hurried him to death——
I must not think on't, lest my friendship stagger.
My friend's, my sister's mutual advantage
Have reconcil'd my bosom to its task.

Vil. Advantage! think not I intend to raise
An interest from Isabella's wrongs.
Your father may have interested ends
In her undoing; but my heart has none;
Her happiness must be my interest,
And that I would restore.

Car. Why so I mean.
These hardships, that my father lays upon her,
I'm sorry for, and wish I could prevent;
But he will have his way. Since there's no hope
From her prosperity, her change of fortune
May alter the condition of her thoughts,
And make for you.

Vil. She is above her fortune.

Car. Try her again. Women commonly love
According to the circumstances they are in.

Vil. Common women may.
No, though I live but in the hopes of her,
And languish for th' enjoyment of those hopes;
I'd rather pine in a consuming want
Of what I wish, than have the blessing mine,
From any reason but consenting love.
Oh! let me never have it to remember,
I could betray her coldly to comply:
When a clear gen'rous choice bestows her on me,
I know to value the unequall'd gift:
I would not have it, but to value it.

Car. Take your own way; remember, what I offer'd
Came from a friend.
Vil. I understand it so.
I'll serve her for herself, without the thought
Of a reward. [*Exit.*
Car. Agree that point between you.
If you marry her any way, you do my business.
I know him—What his gen'rous soul intends
Ripens my plots—I'll first to Isabella.——
I must keep up appearances with her too. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

House.

ISABELLA *and* NURSE *discovered.* ISABELLA'S *Son at play.*

Isa. Sooner, or later, all things pass away,
And are no more. The beggar and the king,
With equal steps, tread forward to their end:
The reconciling grave
Swallows distinction first, that made us foes;
Then all alike lie down in peace together.
[*Weeping.*
Nurse. Good madam, be comforted.
Isa. Do I deserve to be this outcast wretch;
Abandon'd thus, and lost? But 'tis my lot,
The will of Heav'n, and I must not complain:
I will not for myself: let me bear all
The violence of your wrath; but spare my child:
Let not my sins be visited on him:
They are; they must; a general ruin falls
On every thing about me: thou art lost,
Poor Nurse, by being near me.
Nurse. I can work, or beg, to do you service.
Isa. Could I forget
What I have been, I might the better bear

What I am destin'd to. Wild hurrying thoughts
Start every way from my distracted soul,
To find out hope, and only meet despair.
What answer have I?

Enter SAMPSON.

Samp. Why, truly, very little to the purpose: like a Jew as he is, he says you have had more already than the jewels are worth: he wishes you would rather think of redeeming 'em, than expect any more money upon 'em. [*Exit* SAMPSON.

Isa. So:—Poverty at home, and debts abroad!
My present fortune bad; my hopes yet worse!
What will become of me!
This ring is all I have left of value now;
'Twas given me by my husband; his first gift
Upon our marriage: I've always kept it
With my best care, the treasure next my life:
And now but part with it to support life,
Which only can be dearer. Take it, Nurse,
Take care of it:
Manage it as the last remaining friend
That would relieve us. [*Exit* NURSE.] Heav'n can only tell
Where we shall find another——My dear boy!
The labour of his birth was lighter to me
Than of my fondness now; my fears for him
Are more, than in that hour of hovering death,
They could be for myself——He minds me not,
His little sports have taken up his thoughts:
Oh, may they never feel the pangs of mine.
Thinking will make me mad: why must I think,
When no thought brings me comfort?

Enter NURSE.

Nurse. Oh, madam! you are utterly ruin'd and undone; your creditors of all kinds are come in upon *you: they have* mustered up a regiment of rogues,

that are come to plunder your house, and seize upon all you have in the world: they are below. What will you do, madam?

Isa. Do! nothing! no, for I am born to suffer.

Enter CARLOS.

Car. Oh, sister! can I call you by that name,
And be the son of this inhuman man,
Inveterate to your ruin? Can you think
Of any way that I may serve you in?
But what enrages most my sense of grief,
My sorrow for your wrongs, is, that my father,
Foreknowing well the storm that was to fall,
Has ordered me not to appear for you.

Isa. I thank your pity; my poor husband fell
For disobeying him; do not you stay
To venture his displeasure too for me.

Car. You must resolve on something— [*Exit.*

Isa. Hark, they are coming; let the torrent roar:
It can but overwhelm me in its fall;
And life and death are now alike to me.

[*Exeunt, the* NURSE *leading the Child.*

SCENE III.

Antichamber in ISABELLA'S *House.*

CARLOS *and* VILLEROY, *with Officers.*

Vil. No farther violence——
The debt in all is but four thousand crowns:
Were it ten times the sum, I think you know
My fortune very well can answer it.
You have my word for this: I'll see you paid.

Off. That's as much as we can desire: so we have the money, *no matter* whence it comes.

Vil. To-morrow you shall have it.
Car. Thus far all's well——

Enter ISABELLA, *and* NURSE, *with the Child.*

And now my sister comes to crown the work. [*Aside.*
Isa. Where are these rav'ning blood-hounds, that pursue
In a full cry, gaping to swallow me!
I meet your rage, and come to be devour'd;
Say, which way are you to dispose of me!
To dungeons, darkness, death?
Car. Have patience.
Isa. Patience!
Off. You'll excuse us, we are but in our office:
Debts must be paid.
Isa. My death will pay you all. [*Distractedly.*
Off. While there is law to be had, people will have their own.
Vil. 'Tis very fit they should; but pray be gone.
To-morrow certainly—— [*Exeunt* OFFICERS.
Isa. What of to-morrow?
Must I be reserv'd for fresh afflictions?
Vil. For long happiness of life, I hope.
Isa. There is no hope for me.
The load grows light, when we resolve to bear:
I'm ready for my trial,
Car. Pray be calm,
And know your friends.
Isa. My friends? Have I a friend?
Car. A faithful friend; in your extremest need,
Villeroy came in to save you——
Isa. Save me! How?
Car. By satisfying all your creditors.
Isa. Which way? For what?
Vil. Let me be understood,
And then condemn me: you have given me leave
To be your friend; and in that only name
I now appear before you. I could wish

There had been no occasion of a friend,
Because I know you hate to be oblig'd;
And still more loth to be oblig'd by me.
Isa. 'Twas that I would avoid—— [*Aside.*
Vil. I'm most unhappy that my services
Can be suspected to design upon you;
I have no farther ends than to redeem you
From fortune's wrongs; to show myself at last,
What I have long profess'd to be, your friend:
Allow me that; and to convince you more,
That I intend only your interest,
Forgive what I have done, and in amends
(If that can make you any, that can please you)
I'll tear myself for ever from my hopes,
Stifle this flaming passion in my soul,
And mention my unlucky love no more.
Isa. This generosity will ruin me. [*Aside.*
Vil. Nay, if the blessing of my looking on you
Disturbs your peace, I will do all I can
To keep away, and never see you more. [*Going.*
Car. You must not go.
Vil. Could Isabella speak
Those few short words, I should be rooted here,
And never move but upon her commands.
Car. Speak to him, sister; do not throw away
A fortune that invites you to be happy.
In your extremity he begs your love;
And has deserv'd it nobly. Think upon
Your lost condition, helpless and alone.
Though now you have a friend, the time must come
That you will want one; him you may secure
To be a friend, a father, a husband to you.
Isa. A husband!
Car. You have discharg'd your duty to the dead,
And to the living! tis a wilfulness
Not to give way to your necessities,
That force you to this marriage.

Nur. What must become of this poor innocence?
[*To the Child.*

Car. He wants a father to protect his youth,
And rear him up to virtue: you must bear
The future blame, and answer to the world,
When you refuse the easy, honest means
Of taking care of him.

Isa. Do not think I need
Your reasons, to confirm my gratitude;
I have a soul that's truly sensible
Of your great worth, and busy to contrive,
[*To* VILLEROY.
If possible, to make you a return.

Vil. Oh, easily possible!

Isa. It cannot be your way: my pleasures are
Bury'd, and cold in my dead husband's grave;
And I should wrong the truth, myself, and you,
To say that I can ever love again.
I owe this declaration to myself:
But as a proof that I owe all to you,
If, after what I have said, you can resolve
To think me worth your love—Where am I going?
You cannot think it; 'tis impossible.

Vil. Impossible!

Isa. You should not ask me now, nor should I grant;
I am so much oblig'd, that to consent
Would want a name to recommend the gift:
'Twould show me poor, indebted, and compell'd,
Designing, mercenary: and I know
You would not wish to think I could be bought.

Vil. Be bought! where is the price that can pretend
To bargain for you? Not in Fortune's power.
The joys of Heav'n, and love, must be bestow'd;
They are not to be sold, and cannot be deserv'd.

Isa. Some other time I'll hear you on this subject.

Vil. Nay, then there is no time so fit for me.
[*Following her.*

Since you consent to hear me, hear me now;
That you may grant: you are above
[*Takes her hand.*
The little forms which circumscribe your sex;
We differ but in time, let that be mine.
Isa. You think fit
To get the better of me, and you shall;
Since you will have it so——I will be yours.
Vil. I take you at your word.
Isa. I give you all,
My hand; and would I had a heart to give:
But if it ever can return again,
'Tis wholly yours.
Vil. Oh, ecstacy of joy!
Leave that to me. If all my services,
If all that man can fondly say or do,
Can beget love, love shall be born again.
Oh, Carlos! now my friend, and brother too:
And, Nurse, I have eternal thanks for thee.
[*Exit* NURSE *and Child.*
This night you must be mine.
Let me command in this, and all my life
Shall be devoted to you.
Isa. On your word,
Never to press me to put off these weeds,
Which best become my melancholy thoughts,
You shall command me.
Vil. Witness, Heaven and earth
Against my soul, when I do any thing
To give you a disquiet.
Car. I long to wish you joy.
Vil. You'll be a witness of my happiness?
Car. For once I'll be my sister's father,
And give her to you.
Vil. Next, my Isabella,
Be near my heart: I am for ever yours. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

COUNT BALDWIN'S *House.*

Enter COUNT BALDWIN *and* CARLOS.

C. Bald. Married to Villeroy, say'st thou?
Car. Yes, my lord.
Last night the priest perform'd his holy office,
And made them one.
C. Bald. Misfortune join them!
And may her violated vows pull down
A lasting curse, a constancy of sorrow
On both their heads.
Car. Soon he'll hate her;
Though warm and violent in his raptures now;
When full enjoyment palls his sicken'd sense,
And reason with satiety returns,
Her cold constrain'd acceptance of his hand
Will gall his pride, which (though of late o'erpower'd
By stronger passions) will, as they grow weak,
Rise in full force, and pour its vengeance on her.
C. Bald. Now, Carlos, take example to thy aid;
Let Biron's disobedience, and the curse
He took into his bosom, prove a warning,
A monitor to thee, to keep thy duty
Firm and unshaken.
Car. May those rankling wounds,
Which Biron's disobedience gave my father,
Be heal'd by me.

C. Bald. With tears I thank thee, Carlos—
And may'st thou ever feel those inward joys,
Thy duty gives thy father—but, my son,
We must not let resentment choak our justice;
'Tis fit that Villeroy know he has no claim
From me, in right of Isabella.——Biron,
(Whose name brings tears) when wedded to this woman,
By me abandon'd, sunk the little fortune
His uncle left, in vanity and fondness:
I am possess'd of those your brother's papers,
Which now are Villeroy's, and, should aught remain,
In justice it is his; from me to him
You shall convey them—follow me, and take them.
[*Exit* C. BALDWIN.

Car. Yes, I will take them; but ere I part with them,
I will be sure my interest will not suffer
By these his high, refin'd, fantastic notions
Of equity and right.—What a paradox
Is man! My father here, who boasts his honour,
And even but now was warm in praise of justice,
Can steel his heart against the widow's tears,
And infant's wants; the widow and the infant
Of Biron; of his son, his fav'rite son.
'Tis ever thus weak minds, who court opinion,
And dead to virtuous feeling, hide their wants
In pompous affectation—Now to Villeroy—
Ere this his friends, for he is much belov'd,
Crowd to his house, and with their nuptial songs
Awake the wedded pair: I'll join the throng,
And in my face, at least, bear joy and friendship.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Ball Room in VILLEROY'S *House.—A Band of Music, with* MAURICE, *and other Friends of* VILLEROY.

Enter a SERVANT.

Maur. Where's your master, my good friend?
Serv. Within, sir,
Preparing for the welcome of his friends.
Maur. Acquaint him we are here; yet stay,
[*Exit* SERVANT.
The voice of music gently shall surprise him,
And breathe our salutations to his ear.
Strike up the strain to Villeroy's happiness,
To Isabella's—But he's here already.

Enter VILLEROY.

Vil. My friends, let me embrace you:
Welcome all——
What means this preparation? [*Seeing the Music.*
Maur. A slight token
Of our best wishes for your growing happiness——
You must permit our friendship——
Vil. You oblige me——
Maur. But your lovely bride,
That wonder of her sex, she must appear,
And add new brightness to this happy day.
Vil. She is not yet prepar'd; and let her will,
My worthiest friend, determine her behaviour;
To win, and not to force her disposition,
Has been my seven years task. She will anon,
Speak welcome to you all. The music stays.
[VILLEROY *and his Friends seat themselves.*

EPITHALAMIUM.

Woman. *Let all, let all be gay,*
Begin the rapt'rous lay;
Let mirth, let mirth and joy,
Each happy hour employ
Of this fair bridal day.

Man. *Ye love-wing'd hours, your flight,*
Your downy flight prepare,
Bring ev'ry soft delight
To sooth the brave and fair.
Hail, happy pair, thus in each other bless'd;
Be ever free from care, of ev'ry joy possess'd!

Vil. I thank you for the proof of your affection:
I am so much transported with the thoughts
Of what I am, I know not what I do.
My Isabella!——but, possessing her,
Who would not lose himself?—You'll pardon me—
Oh! there was nothing wanting to my soul,
But the kind wishes of my loving friends—
Where's Carlos now?
Methinks I am but half myself without him.

Maur. This is wonderful! Married, and yet in raptures.

Vil. Oh! when you all get wives, and such as mine,
(If such another woman can be found)
You will rave too, doat on the dear content,
And prattle in their praise out of all bounds.

Enter ISABELLA *and Child.*

My Isabella! Oh, the joy of my heart,
That I have leave at last to call you mine!
But let me look upon you, view you well.
This is a welcome gallantry indeed!
I durst not ask, but it was kind to grant,
Just at this time: dispensing with your dress
Upon this second day to greet our friends.

Isa. Black might be ominous;
I would not bring ill luck along with me.
Vil. Oh! if your melancholy thoughts could change
With shifting of your dress—Time has done cures
Incredible this way, and may again.
Isa. I could have wish'd, if you had thought it fit,
Our marriage had not been so public.
Vil. Do not you grudge me my excess of love;
That was a cause it could not be conceal'd:
Besides, 'twould injure the opinion
I have of my good fortune, having you;
And lessen it in other people's thoughts.
Isa. I have no more to say.

Enter CARLOS.

Vil. My Carlos too, who came in to the support
Of our bad fortune, has an honest right,
In better times, to share the good with us.
Car. I come to claim that right, to share your joy;
To wish you joy; and find it in myself;
For a friend's happiness reflects a warmth,
A kindly comfort, into every heart
That is not envious.
Vil. He must be a friend indeed,
Who is not envious of a happiness
So absolute as mine: but if you are,
(As I have reason to believe you are)
Concern'd for my well being, there's the cause;
Thank her for what I am, and what must be.
[*Music flourish.*
I see you mean a second entertainment.
My dearest Isabella, you must hear
The raptures of my friends; from thee they spring;
Thy virtues have diffus'd themselves around,
And made them all as happy as myself.
Isa. I feel their favours with a grateful heart,
And willingly comply.

DUETT.

Take the gifts the gods intend ye:
Grateful meet the proffer'd joy;
Truth and honour shall attend ye;
Charms, that ne'er can change or cloy.

Oh, the raptures of possessing,
Taking beauty to thy arms!
Oh, the joy, the lasting blessing,
When with virtue beauty charms?
Purer flames shall gently warm ye;
Love and honour both shall charm thee.

Car. You'll take my advice another time, sister.

Vil. What have you done? A rising smile
Stole from her thoughts, just redd'ning on her cheek,
And you have dash'd it.

Car. I'm sorry for't.

Vil. My friends, you will forgive me, when I own,
I must prefer her peace to all the world?
Come, Isabella, let us lead the way:
Within we'll speak our welcome to our friends,
And crown the happy festival with joy.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Room.

Enter SAMPSON *and* NURSE.

Samp. Ay, marry, nurse, here's a master, indeed! He'll double our wages for us! If he comes on as fast with my lady, as he does with his servants, we are all in the way to be well pleased.

Nurse. He's in a rare humour; if she be in as good a one——

Samp. If she be, marry, we may e'en say, they have begot it upon one another.

Nurse. Well; why don't you go back again to your

old Count? You thought your throat cut, I warrant you, to be turned out of a nobleman's service.

Samp. For the future, I will never serve in a house, where the master or mistress of it lie single: they are out of humour with every body when they are not pleased themselves. Now, this matrimony makes every thing go well. There's mirth and money stirring about, when those matters go as they should do.

Nurse. Indeed, this matrimony, Sampson——

Samp. Ah, nurse! this matrimony is a very good thing——but what, now my lady is married, I hope we shall have company come to the house: there's something always coming from one gentleman or other upon those occasions, if my lady loves company. This feasting looks well, nurse. Odso, my master! we must not be seen. [*Exit.*

Enter VILLEROY *with a letter, and* ISABELLA.

Vil. I must away this moment—see his letter,
Sign'd by himself: alas! he could no more;
My brother's desperate, and cannot die
In peace, but in my arms.

Isa. So suddenly!

Vil. Suddenly taken, on the road to Brussels,
To do us honour, love; unfortunate!
Thus to be torn from thee, and all those charms,
Though cold to me and dead.

Isa. I'm sorry for the cause.

Vil. Oh! could I think,
Could I persuade myself, that your concern
For me, or for my absence, were the spring,
The fountain, of these melancholy thoughts,
My heart would dance, spite of the sad occasion,
And be a gay companion in my journey;

Enter CARLOS.

My good Carlos, why have you left my friends?

Car. They are departed home

They saw some sudden melancholy news
Had stolen the lively colour from your cheek——
You had withdrawn, the bride, alarm'd, had follow'd:
Mere ceremony had been constraint; and this
Good-natur'd rudeness——
Vil. Was the more obliging.
There, Carlos, is the cause. [*Gives the letter.*
Car. Unlucky accident!
Th' archbishop of Malines, your worthy brother——
With him to-night! Sister, will you permit it?
Vil. It must be so.
Isa. You hear it must be so.
Vil. Oh, that it must!
Car. To leave your bride so soon!
Vil. But having the possession of my love,
I am the better able to support
My absence, in the hopes of my return.
Car. Your stay will be but short?
Vil. It will seem long!
The longer that my Isabella sighs:
I shall be jealous of this rival grief,
It takes so full possession of thy heart,
There is not room enough for mighty love.

Enter SERVANT, *bows, and exit.*

My horses wait: farewell, my love! You, Carlos,
Will act a brother's part, 'till I return,
And be the guardian here. All, all I have
That's dear to me, I give up to your care.
Car. And I receive her as a friend and brother.
Vil. Nay, stir not, love! for the night air is cold,
And the dews fall—Here be our end of parting;
Carlos will see me to my horse. [*Exit with* CARLOS.
Isa. Oh, may thy brother better all thy hopes! Adieu,
A sudden melancholy bakes my blood!
Forgive me, Villeroy———I do not find
That cheerful gratitude thy service asks:

Yet, if I know my heart, and sure I do,
'Tis not averse from honest obligation.
I'll to my chamber, and to bed; my mind,
My harrass'd mind, is weary. [*Exit.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The Street.

Enter BIRON *and* BELFORD.

Bir. The longest day will have an end; we are got home at last.

Bel. We have got our legs at liberty; and liberty is home, where'er we go; though mine lies most in England.

Bir. Pray let me call this yours: for what I can command in Brussels, you shall find your own. I have a father here, who, perhaps, after seven years absence, and costing him nothing in my travels, may be glad to see me. You know my story——How does my disguise become me?

Bel. Just as you would have it; 'tis natural, and will conceal you.

Bir. To-morrow you shall be sure to find me here, as early as you please. This is the house, you have observed the street.

Bel. I warrant you: your directions will carry me to my lodgings. [*Exit.*

Bir. Good night, my friend. [*Knocks.*
The long expected moment is arriv'd!
And if all here is well, my past sorrows
Will only heighten my excess of joy;
And nothing will remain to wish or hope for!
[*Knocks again*

Enter SAMPSON.

Samp. Who's there! What would you have?

Bir. Is your lady at home, friend?

Samp. Why, truly friend, it is my employment to answer impertinent questions: but for my lady's being at home, or no, that's just as my lady pleases.

Bir. But how shall I know, whether it pleases her or no?

Samp. Why, if you'll take my word for it, you may carry your errand back again: she never pleases to see any body at this time of night, that she does not know: and by your dress and appearance, I am sure, you must be a stranger to her.

Bir. But I have business; and you don't know how that may please her.

Samp. Nay, if you have business, she is the best judge whether your business will please her or no: therefore I will proceed in my office, and know of my lady whether or no she is pleas'd to be at home or no— [*Going.*

Enter NURSE.

Nurse. Who's that you are so busy withal? Methinks you might have found an answer in fewer words: but, Sampson, you love to hear yourself prate sometimes, as well as your betters, that I must say for you. Let me come to him, Who would you speak with, stranger?

Bir. With you, mistress, if you could help me to speak to your lady.

Nurse. Yes, sir, I can help you in a civil way: but can nobody do your business but my lady?

Bir. Not so well; but if you carry her this ring, she'll know my business better.

Nurse. There's no love-letter in it, I hope; you look like a civil gentlemen. In an honest way, I may bring you an answer. [*Exit.*

Bir. My old nurse, only a little older! They say the tongue grows always: mercy on me! then her's is seven years longer, since I left her. Yet there is something in these servants' folly pleases me: the cautious conduct of the family appears, and speaks in their impertinence. Well, mistress——

NURSE *returns.*

Nurse. I have deliver'd your ring, sir! pray Heav'n, you bring no bad news along with you.

Bir. Quite contrary, I hope.

Nurse. Nay, I hope so too; but my lady was very much surprised when I gave it her. Sir, I am but a servant, as a body may say; but if you'll walk in, that I may shut the doors, for we keep very orderly hours, I can show you into the parlour, and help you to an answer, perhaps as soon as those that are wiser. [*Exit.*

Bir. I'll follow you——
Now all my spirits hurry to my heart,
And every sense has taken the alarm
At this approaching interview!
Heav'ns! how I tremble! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Chamber.

Enter ISABELLA.

Isa. I've heard of witches, magic spells, and charms,
That have made nature start from her old course:
The sun has been eclips'd, the moon drawn down
From her career, still paler, and subdu'd
To the abuses of this under world!
Now I believe all possible. This ring,
This little ring, with necromantic force,

Has rais'd the ghost of pleasure to my fears;
Conjur'd the sense of honour, and of love,
Into such shapes, they fright me from myself!
I dare not think of them———

Enter NURSE.

Nurse. Madam, the gentleman's below.
Isa. I had forgot, pray let me speak with him;
[*Exit* NURSE.
This ring was the first present of my love
To Biron, my first husband: I must blush
To think I have a second. Biron dy'd
(Still to my loss) at Candy; there's my hope.
Oh, do I live to hope, that he dy'd there?
It must be so; he's dead, and this ring left,
By his last breath, to some known faithful friend,
To bring me back again;
That's all I have to trust to——

Enter BIRON. [ISABELLA *looking at him.*]
My fears were woman's——I have view'd him all:
And let me, let me say it to myself,
I live again, and rise but from his tomb.
Bir. Have you forgot me quite?
Isa. Forgot you!
Bir. Then farewell my disguise, and my misfortunes.
My Isabella!
[*He goes to her; she shrieks, and faints.*
Isa. Ha!
Bir. Oh! come again:
Thy Biron summons thee to life and love;
Thy once lov'd, ever loving husband calls——
Thy Biron speaks to thee.
Isa. My husband! Biron!
Bir. Excess of love and joy, for my return,
Has overpower'd her——I was to blame
To take thy sex's softness unprepar'd:
But *sinking thus, thus* dying in my arms,

This ecstacy has made my welcome more
Than words could say.
Isa. Where have I been? Why do you keep him
from me?
I know his voice: my life, upon the wing,
Hears the soft lute that brings me back again;
'Tis he himself, my Biron.
If I must fall, death's welcome in these arms.
Bir. Live ever in these arms.
Isa. But pardon me,
Excuse the wild disorder of my soul;
The joy, the strange surprising joy of seeing you,
Of seeing you again, distracted me——
What hand of Providence has brought you back
To your own home again!
O tell me all,
For every thought confounds me.
Bir. My best life! at leisure, all.
Isa. We thought you dead; kill'd at the siege
Candy.
Bir. There I fell among the dead;
But hopes of life reviving from my wounds,
I was preserv'd but to be made a slave;
I often writ to my hard father, but never had
An answer; I writ to thee too———
Isa. What a world of woe
Had been prevented but in hearing from you!
Bir. Alas! thou couldst not help me.
Isa. You do not know how much I could have do
At least, I'm sure I could have suffer'd all;
I would have sold myself to slavery,
Without redemption; giv'n up my child,
The dearest part of me, to basest wants——
Bir. My little boy!
Isa. My life, but to have heard
You were alive.
Bir. No more, my love; complaining of the pa
We lose the present joy. 'Tis over price

Of all my pains, that thus we meet again——
I have a thousand things to say to thee——
Isa. Would I were past the hearing. [*Aside.*
Bir. How does my child, my boy, my father, too?
I hear he's living still.
Isa. Well, both, both well;
And may he prove a father to your hopes,
Though we have found him none.
Bir. Come, no more tears.
Isa. Seven long years of sorrow for your loss,
Have mourn'd with me———
Bir. And all my days behind
Shall be employ'd in a kind recompense
For thy afflictions—Can't I see my boy?
Isa. He's gone to bed; I'll have him brought to you.
Bir. To-morrow I shall see him; I want rest
Myself, after this weary pilgrimage.
Isa. Alas! what shall I get for you!
Bir. Nothing but rest, my love! To-night I would not
Be known, if possible, to your family:
I see my nurse is with you; her welcome
Would be tedious at this time;
To-morrow will do better.
Isa. I'll dispose of her, and order every thing
As you would have it. [*Exit.*
Bir. Grant me but life, good Heav'n, and give the means
To make this wond'rous goodness some amends:
And let me then forget her, if I can!
O! she deserves of me much more, than I
Can lose for her, though I again could venture
A father, and his fortune, for her love!
You wretched fathers, blind as fortune all!
Not to perceive, that such a woman's worth
Weighs down the portions you provide your sons:
What is your trash, what all your heaps of gold,
Compar'd to this, my heart-felt happiness?
What has she, in my absence, undergone!

I must not think of that; it drives me back
Upon myself, the fatal cause of all.

Enter ISABELLA.

Isa. I have obey'd your pleasure;
Every thing is ready for you.
Bir. I can want nothing here; possessing thee,
All my desires are carry'd to their aim
Of happiness: there's no room for a wish,
But to continue still this blessing to me:
I know the way, my love. I shall sleep sound.
Isa. Shall I attend you?
Bir. By no means;
I've been so long a slave to others' pride,
To learn, at least, to wait upon myself;
You'll make haste after——
Isa. I'll but say my prayers, and follow you—
[*Exit* BIRON.
My prayers! no, I must never pray again.
Prayers have their blessings to reward our hopes,
But I have nothing left to hope for more.
Oh, Biron, hadst thou come but one day sooner!
[*Weeping.*
——What's to be done—for something must be done.
Two husbands! yet not one! married to both,
And yet a wife to neither! Hold, my brain——
Ha! a lucky thought
Works the right way to rid me of them all;
All the reproaches, infamies, and scorns,
That every tongue and finger will find for me.
Let the just horror of my apprehensions
But keep me warm—no matter what can come.
'Tis but a blow—yet I will see him first—
Have a last look to heighten my despair,
And then to rest for ever.——

BIRON *meets her.*

Bir. Despair and rest for ever! Isabella!

These words are far from thy condition?
And be they ever so. I heard thy voice,
And could not bear thy absence; come, my love!
You have stay'd long, there's nothing, nothing sure
Now to despair of in succeeding fate.
Isa. I am contented to be miserable,
But not this way: I've been too long abus'd,
And can believe no more.
Let me sleep on to be deceiv'd no more.
Bir. Look up, my love, I never did deceive thee,
Nor ever can; believe thyself, thy eyes
That first inflam'd, and light me to my love,
Those stars, that still must guide me to my joys.
Isa. And me to my undoing; I look round
And find no path, but leading to the grave.
Bir. I cannot understand thee.
Isa. If marriages
Are made in heaven, they should be happier:
Why was I made this wretch?
Bir. Has marriage made thee wretched?
Isa. Miserable, beyond the reach of comfort.
Bir. Do I live to hear thee say so?
Isa. Why! what did I say?
Bir. That I have made thee miserable.
Isa. No: you are my only earthly happiness;
And my false tongue bely'd my honest heart,
If it said otherwise.
Bir. And yet you said,
Your marriage made you miserable.
Isa. I know not what I said:
I've said too much, unless I could speak all.
Bir. Thy words are wild; my eyes, my ears, my heart,
Were all so full of thee, so much employ'd
In wonder of thy charms, I could not find it;
Now I perceive it plain——
Isa. You'll tell no body——
Bir. Thou art not well.

Isa. Indeed I am not; I knew that before;
But where's the remedy?
Bir. Rest will relieve thy cares: come, come, no more;
I'll banish sorrow from thee.
Isa. Banish first the cause.
Bir. Heaven knows how willingly.
Isa. You are the only cause.
Bir. Am I the cause? the cause of thy misfortunes?
Isa. The fatal innocent cause of all my woes.
Bir. Is this my welcome home! This the reward
Of all my miseries, long labours, pains,
And pining wants of wretched slavery,
Which I've outliv'd, only in hopes of thee,
Am I thus paid at last for deathless love:
And call'd the cause of thy misfortunes now?
Isa. Enquire no more; 'twill be explain'd too soon.
[*Going off.*
Bir. What? Canst thou leave me too?
Isa. Pray let me go:
For both our sakes, permit me——
Bir. Rack me not with imaginations
Of things impossible——Thou canst not mean
What thou hast said—Yet something she must mean.
—'Twas madness all—Compose thyself, my love!
The fit is past; all may be well again:
Let us to bed.
Isa. To bed! You've rais'd the storm
Will sever us for ever.
The rugged hand of fate has got between
Our meeting hearts, and thrusts them from their joys:
Bir. Nothing shall ever part us.
Isa. Oh! there's a fatal story to be told;
Be deaf to that, as Heaven has been to me!
When thou shalt hear how much thou hast been wrong'd,
How wilt thou curse thy fond believing heart,
Tear me from the warm bosom of thy love,

w me like a poisonous weed away!
ım dead, forgive and pity me. [*Exit.*
What can she mean? These doubtings will dis-
act me:
lden mischief soon will burst to light;
bear it——I must be satisfied——
my wife, must clear this darkness to me.
all—if the sad tale at last must come!
my fate, and best can speak my doom.
[*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A Chamber.

Enter BIRON *and* NURSE.

know enough: th' important question
· death, fearful to be resolv'd,
to me: I see where it must end;
l inquire no more—Pray, let me have
and paper; I must write a while,
ı I'll try to rest—to rest for ever!
[*Exit* NURSE.

ɔella! now I know the cause,
e of thy distress, and cannot wonder
as turn'd thy brain. If I look back
/ loss, it will distract me too.
curse but this might be remov'd!
; the rancorous malignity
stars combin'd, of Heav'n and fate——
ld my impious tongue—Alas! I rave:
[tax the stars, or Heav'n, or fate?
r and my brother are my fates,
/e *me to my ruin.* They knew well

I was alive. Too well they knew how dear
My Isabella——Oh, my wife no more!
How dear her love was to me—Yet they stood,
With a malicious silent joy, stood by,
And saw her give up all my happiness,
The treasure of her beauty to another;
Stood by, and saw her marry'd to another:
Oh, cruel father, and unnatural brother!
I have but to accuse you of my wrongs,
And then to fall forgotten——Sleep or death
Sits heavy on me, and benumbs my pains:
Either is welcome; but the hand of death
Works always sure, and best can close my eyes.
[*Exit* BIRON.

Enter NURSE *and* SAMPSON.

Nurse. Here's strange things towards, Sampson: what will be the end of 'em, do you think?

Samp. Nay, marry Nurse, I can't see so far; but the law, I believe, is on Biron, the first husband's side.

Nurse. Yes; no question, he has the law on his side.

Samp. For I have heard, the law says, a woman must be a widow, all out seven years, before she can marry again, according to law.

Nurse. Ay, so it does; and our lady has not been a widow altogether seven years.

Samp. Why then, Nurse, mark my words, and say I told you so: the man must have his wife again, and all will do well.

Nurse. But if our master Villeroy comes back again—

Samp. Why, if he does, he is not the first man that has had his wife taken from him.

Nurse. For fear of the worst, will you go to the old Count, desire him to come as soon as he can; there may be mischief, and he is able to prevent it.

Samp. Now you say something; now I take you, *Nurse; that will do* well, indeed; mischief should be

prevented, a little thing will make a quarrel, when there's a woman in the way. I'll about it instantly.—
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Chamber.

BIRON *asleep on a Couch.*

Enter ISABELLA.

Isa. Asleep so soon! Oh, happy! happy thou,
Who thus can sleep! I never shall sleep more—
If then to sleep be to be happy, he,
Who sleeps the longest, is the happiest;
Death is the longest sleep—Oh, have a care!
Mischief will thrive apace. Never wake more.
[*To* BIRON.
If thou didst ever love thy Isabella,
To-morrow must be doomsday to thy peace.
——The sight of him disarms ev'n death itself.
And pleasure grows again
With looking on him—Let me look my last——
But is a look enough for parting love!
Sure I may take a kiss——Where am I going!
Help, help me, Villeroy!—Mountains and seas
Divide your love, never to meet my shame.
Hark!
What noise was that! A knocking at the gate!
It may be Villeroy——No matter who.

Bir. Come, Isabella, come.——

Isa. Hark! I'm call'd!

Bir. You stay too long from me.

Isa. A man's voice! in my bed! How came he there?
Nothing but villainy in this bad world.
Here's physic for your fever.
[*Draws a dagger, and goes backward to the couch.*
If husbands go to Heaven,
Where do they go that send them?—This to thy—
[*Going to stab him, he rises, she shrieks.*
What do I see!

Bir. Isabella, arm'd!

Isa. Against my husband's life!
Bir. Thou did'st not think it.
Isa. Madness has brought me to the gates of hell,
And there has left me.
Bir. Why dost thou fly me so?
Isa. I cannot bear his sight; distraction, come,
Possess me all.
Shake off my chains, and hasten to my aid;—
Thou art my only cure—— [*Running out.*
Bir. Poor Isabella, she's not in a condition
To give me any comfort, if she could:
Lost to herself—as quickly I shall be
To all the world—Horrors come fast around me;
My mind is overcast—the gath'ring clouds
Darken the prospect—I approach the brink,
And soon must leap the precipice! Oh! Heav'n!
[*Kneels.*
While yet my senses are my own, thus kneeling,
Let me implore thy mercies on my wife:
Release her from her pangs; and if my reason,
O'erwhelm'd with miseries, sink before the tempest,
Pardon those crimes despair may bring upon me.
[*Rises.*

Enter NURSE.

Nurse. Sir, there's somebody at the door must needs speak with you; he won't tell his name.
Bir. I come to him. [*Exit* NURSE.
'Tis Belford, I suppose; he little knows
Of what has happen'd here; I wanted him,
Must employ his friendship, and then— [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Street.

Enter CARLOS, PEDRO, *and three* RUFFIANS.

Car. A younger brother! I was one too long
Not to prevent my being so again.
We must be sudden. Younger brothers are

But lawful bastards of another name,
Thrust out of their nobility of birth
And family, and tainted into trades.
Shall I be one of them—Bow, and retire,
To make more room for the unwieldy heir
To play the fool in? No——
But how shall I prevent it?—Biron comes
To take possession of my father's love—
Would that were all! there's a birth right too
That he will seize. Besides, if Biron lives,
He will unfold some practices, which I
Cannot well answer—therefore he shall die;
This night must be dispos'd of: I have means
That will not fail my purpose.—Here he comes.

Enter BIRON.

Bir. Ha! am I beset? I live but to revenge me.

[*They surround him, fighting:* VILLEROY *enters with two* SERVANTS; *they rescue him;* CARLOS *and his Party fly.*

Vil. How are you, sir? Mortally hurt, I fear.
Take care, and lead him in.

Bir. I thank you for the goodness, sir: though 'tis
Bestow'd upon a very wretch; and death,
Though from a villain's hand, had been to me
An act of kindness, and the height of mercy—
But I thank you, sir. [*He is led in.*

SCENE IV.

A Chamber.

Enter ISABELLA.

Isa. Murder my husband! Oh! I must not dare
To think of living on; my desperate hand
In a mad rage may offer it again;
Stab me any where but there. Here's room enough
In my own breast, to act the fury in,
The proper scene of mischief.

[*Going to stab herself,* VILLEROY *runs in and prevents her, by taking the* dagger *from her.*

Vil. Angels defend and save thee!
Attempt thy precious life!
Lay violent hands upon thy innocent self!
Isa. Swear I am innocent, and I'll believe you.
What would you have with me? Pray let me go.
—Are you there, sir? You are the very man
Have done all this.—You would have made
Me believe you married me; but the fool
Was wiser.
Vil. Dost thou not know me, love?
'Tis Villeroy, thy husband.
Isa. I have none; no husband— [*Weeping.*
Never had but one, and he dy'd at Candy.
Speak, did he not die there?
Vil. He did, my life.
Isa. But swear it, quickly swear,

Enter BIRON, *bloody, leaning upon his sword.*

Before that screaming evidence appears,
In bloody proof against me—
[*She seeing* BIRON, *swoons;* VILLEROY *helps her.*
Vil. Help there! Nurse, where are you?
Ha! I am distracted too! [*Sees* BIRON.
Biron alive!
Bir. The only wretch on earth, that must not live.
Vil. Biron or Villeroy must not, that's decreed.
Bir. You've sav'd me from the hands of murderers:
Would you had not, for life's my greatest plague—
And then, of all the world, you are the man
I would not be oblig'd to—Isabella!
I came to fall before thee: I had dy'd
Happy not to have found your Villeroy here:
A long farewell, and a last parting kiss. [*Kisses her.*
Vil. A kiss! confusion! it must be your last.
Bir. I know it must—Here I give up that death
You but delay'd: since what is past has been

The work of fate, thus we must finish it.
Thrust home, be sure. [*Falls.*
Vil. Alas! he faints! some help there.
Bir. 'Tis all in vain, my sorrows soon will end—
Oh, Villeroy! let a dying wretch intreat you
To take this letter to my father. My Isabella!
Couldst thou but hear me, my last words should bless thee.
I cannot, though in death, bequeath her to thee.
[*To* VILLEROY.
But could I hope my boy, my little one,
Might find a father in thee—Oh, I faint—
I can no more—Hear me, Heav'n! Oh! support
My wife, my Isabella—Bless my child!
And take a poor unhappy—— [*Dies.*
Vil. He's gone—Let what will be the consequence,
I'll give it him. I have involv'd myself,
And would be clear'd; that must be thought on now.
My care of her is lost in wild amaze. [*Exit.*
Isa. [*Recovering.*] Where have I been?—Methinks, I stand upon
The brink of life,
But still detain'd, I cannot pass the strait;
Deny'd to live, and yet I must not die:
Doom'd to come back, like a complaining ghost,
To my unbury'd body—Here it lies——
[*Throws herself by* BIRON'S *body.*
My body, soul, and life. A little dust,
To cover our cold limbs in the dark grave—
There, there we shall sleep safe and sound together.

Enter VILLEROY, *with* SERVANTS.

Vil. Poor wretch; upon the ground! She's not herself:
Remove her from the body.
[SERVANTS *going to raise her.*
Isa. Never, never——
You have divorc'd us once, but shall no more—

Help, help me, Biron!—Ha!—bloody and dead!
Oh, murder! murder! you have done this deed—
Vengeance and murder!—bury us together—
Do any thing but part us.
Vil. Gently, gently raise her.
She must be forc'd away. [*They carry her off.*
Isa. Oh; they tear me! Cut off my hands——
Let me leave something with him—
They'll clasp him fast——
Oh, cruel, cruel men! [NURSE *follows her.*
Vil. Send for all helps: all, all that I am worth,
Shall cheaply buy her peace of mind again.
[*To a* SERVANT.
The storm grows loud— [*Knocking at the door.*
I am prepar'd for it. Now let them in.

Enter COUNT BALDWIN, CARLOS, BELFORD, MAURICE, EGMONT, *with* SERVANTS.

C. Bald. Oh, do I live to this unhappy day!
Where is my wretched son?
Car. Where is my brother?
[*They see him, and gather about the body.*
Vil. I hope in Heav'n.
Car. Canst thou pity him!
Wish him in Heav'n, when thou hast done a deed,
That must for ever cut thee from the hopes
Of ever coming there?
Vil. I do not blame you—
You have a brother's right to be concern'd
For his untimely death.
Car. Untimely death, indeed!
Vil. But yet you must not say, I was the cause.
Car. Not you the cause! Why who should murder him?
We do not ask you to accuse yourself;
But I must say, that you have murder'd him;
And will say nothing else, till justice draws
Upon our side, at the loud call of blood,

To execute so foul a murderer.
Bel. Poor Biron! is this thy welcome home!
Maur. Rise, sir; there is a comfort in revenge,
Which is left you. [*To* C. BALDWIN.
Car. Take the body hence. [BIRON *carried off.*
C. Bald. What could provoke you?
Vil. Nothing could provoke me
To a base murder, which I find, you think
Me guilty of. I know my innocence;
My servants too can witness that I drew
My sword in his defence, to rescue him.
Bel. Let the servants be call'd.
Egm. Let's hear what they can say.
Car. What they can say! Why, what should servants say?
They are his accomplices, his instruments,
And will not charge themselves.
No, no, he came
Unseasonably, (that was all his crime)
Unluckily, to interrupt your sport:
You were new marry'd—marry'd to his wife;
And therefore you, and she, and all of you,
(For all of you I must believe concern'd)
Combin'd to murder him out of the way.
Bel. If it is so——
Car. It can be only so.
Egm. Indeed it has a face——
Car. As black as hell.
C. Bald. The law will do me justice: send for the magistrate.
Car. I'll go myself for him— [*Exit.*
Vil. These strong presumptions, I must own indeed,
Are violent against me; but I have
A witness, and on this side Heav'n too.
——Open that door.
[*Door opens, and* PEDRO *is brought forward by* VILLEROY'S SERVANTS.
Here's one *can tell you* all.

Ped. All, all; save me but from the rack, I'll confess all.

Vil. You and your accomplices design'd
To murder Biron?——Speak.

Ped. We did.

Vil. Did you engage upon your private wrongs,
Or were employ'd?

Ped. He never did us wrong.

Vil. You were set on then?

Ped. We were set on.

Vil. What do you know of me?

Ped. Nothing, nothing:
You sav'd his life, and have discovered me.

Vil. He has acquitted me.
If you would be resolv'd of any thing,
He stands upon his answer.

Bel. Who set you on to act this horrid deed?

C. Bald. I'll know the villain; give me quick his name,
Or I will tear it from thy bleeding heart.

Ped. I will confess.

C. Bald. Do then.

Ped. It was my master, Carlos, your own son.

C. Bald. Oh, monstrous! monstrous! most unnatural!

Bel. Did he employ you to murder his own brother?

Ped. He did; and he was with us when 'twas done.

C. Bald. If this be true, this horrid, horrid tale,
It is but just upon me: Biron's wrongs
Must be reveng'd; and I the cause of all!

Maur. What will you do with him?

C. Bald. Take him apart——
I know too much. [*Exit* PEDRO, *guarded.*

Vil. I had forgot—Your wretched, dying, son
Gave me this letter for you. [*Gives it to* C. BALDWIN.
I dare deliver it. It speaks of me,
I pray to have it read.

C. Bald. You know the hand?

Bel. I know 'tis Biron's hand.

C. Bald. Pray read it. [BELFORD reads the letter.

Sir,

I find I am come only to lay my death at your door. I am now going out of the world; but cannot forgive you, nor my brother Carlos, for not hindering my poor wife Isabella from marrying with Villeroy; when you both knew from so many letters that I was alive.— BIRON.

Vil. How! Did you know it then?

C. Bald. Amazement all!

Enter CARLOS, *with* OFFICERS.

Oh, Carlos! are you come? Your brother here,
Here, in a wretched letter, lays his death
To you and me—Have you done any thing
To hasten his sad end!

Car. Bless me, sir, I do any thing! who, I?

C. Bald. He talks of letters that were sent to us.
I never heard of any—Did you know
He was alive?

Car. Alive! Heaven knows, not I.

C. Bald. Had you no news of him, from a report,
Or letter, never?

Car. Never, never, I.

Bel. That's strange, indeed: I know he often writ
To lay before you the condition [*To* C. BALDWIN.
Of his hard slavery: and more I know,
That he had several answers to his letters.
He said, they came from you, you are his brother.

Car. Never from me.

Bel. That will appear.
The letters, I believe, are still about him;
For some of them I saw but yesterday.

C. Bald. What did those answers say?

Bel. I cannot speak to the particulars;
But I remember well, the sum of them
Was much the same, and all agreed,
That there was nothing to be hop'd from you:

That 'twas your barbarous resolution
To let him perish there.——
C. Bald. Oh, Carlos! Carlos! hadst thou been a brother—
Car. This is a plot upon me. I never knew
He was in slavery, or was alive,
Or heard of him, before this fatal hour.
Bel. There, sir, I must confront you.
He sent you a letter, to my knowledge, last night;
And you sent him word you would come to him—
I fear you came too soon.
C. Bald. 'Tis all too plain.—
Bring out that wretch before him.
[PEDRO *produced.*
Car. Ha! Pedro there!—Then I am caught, indeed.
Bel. You start at sight of him;
He has confess'd the bloody deed.
Car. Well then, he has confess'd,
And I must answer it.
Bel. Is there no more?
Car. Why!—what would you have more? I know the worst,
And I expect it.
C. Bald. Why hast thou done all this?
Car. Why that which damns most men has ruin'd me;
The making of my fortune. Biron stood
Between me and your favour; while he liv'd,
I had not that; hardly was thought a son,
And not at all akin to your estate.
I could not bear a younger brother's lot,
To live depending upon courtesy——
Had you provided for me like a father,
I had been still a brother.
C. Bald. 'Tis too true;
I never lov'd thee as I should have done
It was my sin, and I am punish'd for't.

Oh! never may distinction rise again
In families: let parents be the same
To all their children; common in their care,
And in their love of them.—I am unhappy,
For loving one too well.
Vil. You knew your brother, liv'd; why did you take
Such pains to marry me to Isabella?
Car. I had my reasons for't.——
Vil. More than I thought you had.
Car. But one was this——
I knew my brother lov'd his wife so well,
That if he ever should come home again,
He could not long outlive the loss of her.
Bel. If you rely'd on that, why did you kill him?
Car. To make all sure. Now, you are answer'd all.
Where must I go? I am tir'd of your questions.
C. Bald. I leave the judge to tell thee what thou art;
A father cannot find a name for thee.
Take him away— [CARLOS *led off.*
Grant me, sweet Heav'n! the patience to go through
The torment of my cure—Here, here begins
The operation.—Alas! she's mad.

Enter ISABELLA, *distracted; and her Child running from her: Women following her.*

Vil. My Isabella, poor unhappy wretch!
What can I say to her?
Isa. Nothing, nothing; 'tis a babbling world—
I'll hear no more on't. When does the court sit?
I have a cause to try.
Will you not hear it? Then I must appeal
To the bright throne—Call down the heav'nly powers
To witness how you use me.
C. Bald. Pray give her way.
Isa. What have you done with him? He was here but now;
I saw him here. Oh, Biron, Biron! where,

Where have they hid thee from me? He is gone—
But here's a little flaming cherubim—
Child. Oh, save me, save me!
[*Running to* C. BALDWIN.
I fear she'll kill me.
C. Bald. She will not hurt thee.
Isa. Will nothing do? I did not hope to find
Justice on earth; 'tis not in Heav'n neither.
Biron has watch'd his opportunity——
Softly; he steals it from the sleeping gods,
And sends it thus— [*Stabs herself.*
Now, now I laugh at you, I defy you all,
You tyrant murderers.
Vil. Call, call for help——Oh, Heav'n! this was too much.
C. Bald. Oh, thou most injur'd innocence! Yet live,
Live but to witness for me to the world,
How much I do repent me of the wrongs,
The unnatural wrongs, which I have heap'd on thee,
And have pull'd down this judgment on us all.
Vil. Oh, speak, speak but a word of comfort to me!
C. Bald. If the most tender father's care and love
Of thee, and thy poor child, can make amends——
Oh, yet look up and live.
Isa. Where is that little wretch? [*They raise her.*
I die in peace to leave him to your care.
I have a wretched mother's legacy,
A dying kiss—pray let me give it him,
My blessing; that, that's all I have to leave thee.
Oh, may thy father's virtues live in thee,
And all his wrongs be buried in my grave! [*Dies.*
Vil. She's gone, and all my joys of life with her.

THE END.

ORTONORO.

[illegible] THIS [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] SCENE IV

Painted by Howard. Pub. by Longman & Co. 1816. Engraved by C. Heath.

OROONOKO;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By THOMAS SOUTHERN.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

SAVAGE AND EASINGWOOD,
PRINTERS, LONDON.

REMARKS.

The valuable half of this drama, which is the tragic part, is founded neither upon fictitious characters nor events. Such an African prince, as Oroonoko, stolen from his native kingdom of Angola, was actually brought to an English settlement in the West Indies, and sold for a slave.

This pitiable occurence took place in the reign of Charles II. at the time that Mrs. Behn, the well-known dramatic writer,whom Pope has honoured by a satire, resided at Surinam with her family; her father having been appointed lieutenant general of that settlement, and of thirty neighbouring islands.

It was at Surinam, that Mrs. Behn, not only saw, but became intimately acquainted with the unfortunate, but still proud and dignified, Oroonoko. She was witness to his bravery and skill in arms, upon the occasion of some danger threatening the island: and she beheld his humility and moderation, when all his martial feats were performed, and tranquillity restored. She knew his Imoinda, and saw with delight their rapturous affection for each other.

On the return of Mrs. Behn to England, she published the memoirs of those ill-fated lovers; from

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which publication, Southern has selected materials for this pathetic tragedy.

Whether the comic characters are taken from persons in real life, or from the poet's fancy, is not known: nor is it of much consequence from whence they came, as they can do no great degree of honour to their birth-place.

The repulsive qualities of some of those characters, joined to the little which has been allotted for the heroine to perform, have been obstacles to the attraction of this drama, and it is seldom acted. Yet, some years past, Mr. Pope, in his very first appearance upon any stage, encountered, and triumphantly overcame, all impediments to the favourable reception of Oroonoko; and made the play so impressive, by his talents in the representation of that character, that for many nights it drew to the theatre a crowded audience. His acting was remarkably fine in the last scene; whilst his youth, person, deportment, and even features, gave an accurate portraiture of one of Africa's princely sons.

But could the ancient Roscius ascend from his grave to personate the hero of this piece, there is a great mercantile town in England, whose opulent inhabitants would not permit the play to appear in their magnificent theatre. The tragedy of "Oroonoko" is never acted in Liverpool, for the very reason why it ought to be acted there oftener than at any other place—The merchants of that great city acquire their riches by the slave trade.

If any defect can be attributed to Southern in the

tragic fable, either of this play or of " Isabella," it is, that in the one, his first male character wants importance, and in the other, his principal female. Still, in both plays, he makes his tale, a tale of woe, though only a single personage becomes the object of deep concern.

That the poet Gray was an admirer of this tragedy, is seen in a letter of his to Horace Walpole, dated, Burnham in Buckinghamshire, 1737; wherein he says, " We have old Mr. Southern, at a gentleman's house a little way off, who often comes to see us. He is now seventy years old, and has almost wholly lost his memory; but is as an agreeable old man as can be; at least, I persuade myself so, when I look at him, and think of Isabella and Oroonoko *."

Southern is an exception from most poets, in having been wealthy; but he procured some of his wealth by a means, which all poets should rather submit to poverty than employ: he printed tickets on his benefit nights as an author, and even urged their sale among his noble and distinguished friends. Thus, vilely reducing himself to dependence, in order to become rich; in lieu of honourably seeking riches, that he might become independent.

* See Mason's Life of Gray.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

OROONOKO	*Master Betty.*
ABOAN	*Mr. C. Kemble.*
GOVERNOR	*Mr. Murray.*
BLANDFORD	*Mr. Brunton.*
STANMORE	*Mr. Claremont.*
CAPTAIN DRIVER	*Mr. Emery.*
HOTMAN	*Mr. Creswell.*

PLANTERS.

Messrs. Atkins—Beverly—Davenport—Field—Harley—King—Klanert—Lee—Menage.

IMOINDA	*Miss Smith.*
WIDOW	*Mrs. Emery.*

SLAVES.

Messrs. Abbot—T. Blanchard—Bologna—Goodwin—Jefferies—Lewiss—Powers—Sarjant—Treby—Truman—Wilde.

Mesdames—Bologna—Bologna—Cox—Dibdin—Follet, and Ratchford.

SCENE—Surinam.

OROONOKO.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

View of the Sea.

Enter several PLANTERS.

1 *Plan.* Well, neighbours, Captain Driver has brought us a fresh supply—more slaves.

2 *Plan.* Ay, and I'm sure we had never more need of 'em.

3 *Plan.* That's true, indeed, and I'm afraid we shall never have less.

4 *Plan.* Yes, yes; we shall have enough of 'em, I warrant you, when they come to breed.

3 *Plan.* Breed! it's a sign you're a new comer; plague on 'em, a parcel of lazy, obstinate, untractable pagans;—half of 'em are so sulky, when they first come, that they won't eat their victuals when it's set before 'em, and a christian may beat 'em 'till he drops down, before he can make 'em eat, if they han't a mind to it.

2 *Plan.* Beat! aye, faith, he may beat those that will eat, long enough before they will work: And, what with their starving themselves, and what with the discipline they require, before they will put out their strength, they die as fast as rotten sheep, plague on em! The poor industrious planter loses the money they cost him, and his ground runs to ruin for want of their labour.

1 *Plan.* Ay, in truth, a christian colony has a hard time of it, that is forc'd to deal in this cursed heathen commodity: Here every time a ship comes in, my money goes for a great raw-boned negro fellow, that has the impudence to think he is my fellow-creature, with as much right to liberty as I have, and so grows sullen and refuses to work; or, for a young wench, who will howl night and day after a brat or a lover, forsooth.

4 *Plan.* Nay, as far as I see yet, the women are worse than the men; but 'Squire Blandford has got one that they say is not of their complexion.

3 *Plan.* So they say; but she's of the breed, I'll warrant her—she's one of the sulky ones—the Lieutenant Governor has taken a fancy to her; and yet, wou'd you believe it, she gives herself airs, and will scarce speak to him.

2 *Plan.* I've heard of her; they call her Clemene.

4 *Plan.* 'Tis a wonder, however, that his honour don't buy her.

3 *Plan.* She was in a lot that Mr. Blandford drew for the Lord Governor himself, who you know is expected by the next ship from England, and she cannot be sold without his consent.

4 *Plan.* In a lot drawn for the Lord Governor?—I don't yet perfectly understand this method of drawing lots.

1 *Plan.* No! why nothing is so easy; the colony agrees with the buccaneer to bring a certain number

of slaves, at so much a head; and when they come in, we draw for them to prevent disputes; for, as they're all of a price, every one, you know, wou'd be for picking out the best—come along with us to the market, and you'll see how it is presently; the slaves are now coming on shore. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

An open Place.

Enter LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, BLANDFORD, *and* STANMORE.

Gov. There's no resisting your fortune, Blandford; you draw all the prizes.

Blan. I draw for our Lord Governor, you know; his fortune favours me.

Gov. I grudge him nothing this time; but if fortune had favour'd me in the last sale, the fair slave had been mine; Clemene had been mine.

Blan. Are you still in love with her?

Gov. Every day more in love with her.

Enter CAPTAIN DRIVER, *teazed and pulled about by several* PLANTERS, MEN *and* WOMEN.

Wom. Here have I six slaves in my lot, and not a man among them; all women and children; what can I do with 'em, Captain? pray consider I am a woman myself.

1 *Plan.* I have all men in mine: pray, Captain, let the men and women be mingled together, for the good of the plantation.

2 *Plan.* Ay, ay, a man and a woman, Captain, for *the good of the plantation.*

Capt. Let them mingle together, and be damn'd, what care I? would you have me pimp for the good of the plantation?

1 *Plan.* I am a constant customer, Captain,

Wom. I am always ready money to you, Captain.

1 *Plan.* For that matter, mistress, my money is as ready as yours.

Wom. Pray hear me, Captain.

Capt. Look you, I have done my part by you; I have brought the number of slaves you bargain'd for; if your lots have not pleas'd you, you must draw again among yourselves.

3 *Plan.* I am contented with my lot.

4 *Plan.* I am very well satisfied.

3 *Plan.* We'll have no drawing again.

Capt. Do you hear, mistress? you may hold your tongue: For my part I expect my money.

Wom. Captain, nobody questions or scruples the payment: But I won't hold my tongue; 'tis too much to pray and pay too: One may speak for one's own, I hope.

Capt. Well, what would you say?

Wom. I say no more than I can make out.

Capt. Out with it then.

Wom. I say, Things have not been so fair carried as they might have been. How do I know but you have juggled together in my absence? You drew the lots before I came, I'm sure.

Capt. That's your own fault, mistress; you might have come sooner.

Wom. Then here's a prince, as they say, among the slaves, and you set him down to go as a common man.

Capt. Why, what should make him worth more than a common man? He'll not do the more work for being a prince, will he?

Gov. Where are the slaves, Captain; They are long *coming.*

Blan. And who is this prince that's fallen to my lot for the Lord Governor? Let me know something of him, that I may treat him accordingly? who is he?

Capt. He's the devil of a fellow, I can tell you? a prince every inch of him: You have paid dear enough for him, for all the good he'll do you: I was forc'd to clap him in irons, and did not think the ship safe neither. You are in hostility with the Indians; they say, they threaten you daily: You had best have an eye upon him.

Blan. But who is he?

Gov. And how do you know him to be a prince?

Capt. He is son and heir to the great King of Angola, a mischievous monarch in those parts, who, by his good will, would never let any of his neighbours be in quiet. This son was his general; a plaguy fighting fellow. I have formerly had dealings with him for slaves, which he took prisoners, and have got pretty roundly by him. But the wars being at an end, and nothing more to be got by the trade of that country, I made bold to bring the prince along with me.

Gov. How could you do that?

Blan. What! steal a prince out of his own country! impossible.

Capt. 'Twas hard indeed; but I did it. You must know this Oroonoko——

Blan. Is that his Name?

Capt. Ay, Oroonoko.

Gov. Oroonoko.

Capt. Is naturally inquisitive about the men and manners of the white nations. Because I could give him some account of the other parts of the world, I grew very much into his favour: In return of so great an honour, you know I could do no less, upon my coming away, than invite him on board me: never having

been in a ship, he appointed his time, and I prepared my entertainment; he came the next evening, as private as he could, with about some twenty along with him. The punch went round; and as many of his attendants as would be dangerous, I sent dead drunk on shore; the rest we secured; and so you have the Prince Oroonoko.

1 *Plan.* Gad a mercy, Captain; there you were with him, i'faith.

2 *Plan.* Such men as you are fit to be employed in public affairs: The plantation will thrive by you.

3 *Plan.* Industry ought to be encouraged.

Capt. There's nothing done without it, boys. I have made my fortune this way.

Blan. Unheard of villainy!

Stan. Barbarous treachery!

Blan. They applaud him for't.

Gov. But, Captain, methinks you have taken a great deal of pains for this Prince Oroonoko; why did you part with him at the common rate of slaves?

Capt. Why, Lieutenant-Governor, I'll tell you! I did design to carry him to England, to have show'd him there; but I found him troublesome upon my hands, and I'm glad I'm rid of him——Oh, oh, hark, they come!

Enter BLACK SLAVES, *in Chains*, MEN, WOMEN, *and* CHILDREN, ABOAN, *and Others of* OROONOKO'S *Attendants*, OROONOKO *last of all, in Chains.*

Capt. Now, Governor, pray observe him.

Oro. So, sir, you have kept your word with me.

Capt. I am a better christian, I thank you, than to keep it with a heathen.

Oro. You are a christian, be a christian still:
If you have any god that teaches you
To break your word, I need not curse you more:

Let him cheat you, as you are false to me.
You faithful followers of my better fortune,
We have been fellow-soldiers in the field;
[*Embracing his Friends.*
Now we are fellow-slaves. This last farewell.
Be sure of one thing that will comfort us,
Whatever world we are next thrown upon
Cannot be worse than this.
[*All* SLAVES *go off but* OROONOKO.

Capt. You see what a bloody pagan he is, Governor; but I took care, that none of his followers should be in the same lot with him, for fear they should undertake some desperate action, to the danger of the colony.

Oro. Live still in fear; it is the villain's curse,
And will revenge my chains: Fear even me,
Who have no power to hurt thee. Nature abhors,
And drives thee out from the society
And commerce of mankind, for breach of faith.
Men live and prosper but in mutual trust,
A confidence of one another's truth:
That thou hast violated. I have done;
I know my fortune, and submit to it.

Gov. Sir, I am sorry for your fortune, and would help it if I could.

Blan. Take off his chains. You know your condition; but you are fallen into honourable hands: You are the Lord Governor's slave, who will use you nobly: In his absence it shall be my care to serve you. [BLANDFORD *applying to him.*

Oro. I hear you, but I can believe no more.

Gov. Captain, I'm afraid the world won't speak so honourably of this action of yours, as you would have 'em.

Capt. I have the money, let the world speak and be damn'd; I care not.

Oro. I would forget myself. Be satisfied.
[To BLANDFORD.

I am above the rank of common slaves.
Let that content you. The christian there, that knows me,
For his own sake will not discover more.

Capt. I have other matters to mind. You have him, and much good may do you with your prince.
[*Exit.*

[*The* PLANTERS *pulling and staring at* OROONOKO.

Blan. What would you have here? You stare as if you never saw a man before. Stand farther off.
[*Turns them away.*

Oro. Let them stare on;
I am unfortunate, but not asham'd
Of being so: no, let the guilty blush,
The white man that betray'd me: honest black
Disdains to change its colour. I am ready;
Where must I go? Dispose me as you please,
I am not well acquainted with my fortune,
But must learn to know it better: So I know, you say,
Degrees make all things easy.

Blan. All things shall be easy.

Oro. Tear off this pomp, and let me know myself:
The slavish habit best becomes me now.
Hard fare and whips, and chains may overpow'r
The frailer flesh, and bow my body down:
But there's another, nobler part of me,
Out of your reach, which you can never tame.

Blan. You shall find nothing of this wretchedness You apprehend. We are not monsters all.
You seem unwilling to disclose yourself:
Therefore for fear the mentioning your name
Should give you new disquiets, I presume
To call you Cæsar.

Oro. I am myself; but call me what you please.

Gov. A very good name, Cæsar,
And very fit for his character.

Oro. *Was Cæsar* then a slave?

Gov. I think he was; to pirates too: He was a great
Conqueror, but unfortunate in his friends——
Oro. His friends were christians?
Blan. No,
Oro. No! that's strange;
Gov. And murder'd by them.
Oro. I would be Cæsar then. Yet I will live.
Blan. Live to be happier.
Oro. Do what you will with me.
Blan. I will wait upon you, attend, and serve you.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Grove—a Plantation seen at a little Distance.

Enter ABOAN.

Abo. At length I am alone—but why alone?
My thoughts are worse society to me
Than the poor slaves, with whom I'm doom'd to labour——
I cannot bear it—if I turn my view
Backward or forward, round me, or within,
'Tis all regret, oppression, and despair.——
Yet why despair!—something may yet be done;—
May yet be done—hold—let me most distrust
The flatterer hope—if she one moment lures me
To patient suff'rance, from that fatal moment
Insidious slumbers steal upon my virtue—
I shall—distraction! *must* grow tame by habit—
I must—what else has quench'd in those around me
That indignation which now choaks my utt'rance?
All hell *is in the thought*—my struggle must be now,

This instant, now—precipitation's wisdom—

[SLAVES *at a Distance.*

Slav. Hoa! Hoa! Aboan, Aboan—

Abo. Hark! here they come—It must, it shall be so:

Hackney'd they are in mis'ries new to me,
Like secret fire that smokeless embers hide.
Yet still the love of liberty must live.

Enter Three SLAVES.

1 *Slav.* Here, where are you? come, to work, to work.

2 *Slav.* You are a stranger, ignorant of your duty;
Or else this idleness had been chastis'd
With many a smarting blow.

3 *Slav.* Ay, good Aboan,
Come, come with us, for if the overseer
Ev'n now surprise us——

2 *Slav.* Hush, I hear his voice——

1 *Slav.* No, no, 'tis not he——

Abo. Wou'd he scourge us then?

3 *Slav.* Wou'd he? Experience soon will tell you that.

Abo. Has then experience ever told it you?

3 *Slav.* Has it? don't ask me—wou'd I could say no?

Abo. You have been beaten then to patient drudgery.

2 *Slav.* 'Tis shameful to confess it, yet 'tis true.

Abo. What to confess is shameful, is it not
More shameful still to suffer?

3 *Slav.* What if it be?

Abo. Then suffer it no longer.

1 *Slav.* No longer—no, if we knew how to help it.

Abo. Knew how?—suppose a friend should tell you how?

[*They gather eagerly about him.*

2 *Slav.* What say you?
1 *Slav.* Are there ways?
3 *Slav.* Can you tell us?
Abo. I see by this impatience you're not quell'd
Into a torpid tame insensibility;
I'll tell you then such news as shall revive
Each drooping virtue, string each nerve anew.
All Slav. What is it—what is it?—
Abo. There is among you now a mighty prince,
Before the lightning of whose dreaded sword,
These pale, cold, half-form'd tyrants that insult ye
Wou'd vanish, like thin mists before the sun.
1 *Slav.* What, did he come with you?
Abo. He came with me,
I am myself distinguish'd by his friendship,
And oft with him have led the front of battle.
2 *Slav.* But how, where——
3 *Slav.* Is there only you and he?
Abo. There are six more of high command about him,
All try'd, all firm, all fit for great atchievements.
1 *Slav.* Where are they?
Abo. The prince, my lord, not long since parted from me;
The rest, not now far off, will soon be found——
When we were parted, he embraced us all;
My friends, says he, "One thing will comfort us,
Whatever world we are thrown next upon
Cannot be worse than this"——
These were my royal master's words at parting,
And sure you cannot doubt but they are true.
Shall we then, having nothing worse to fear,
Bear with dull sluggish patience what we suffer!—
If nothing's worse, the chance is all for gain:—
There can be danger then in no attempt;
And if there was 'twere better still, for danger

Has always its equivalent in glory.

[*The* SLAVES *look on each other eagerly, as silently asking each other what they think—after a Pause.*

1 *Slav.* And will this prince, and you, and these your friends
Assist us to be free?

Abo. Will you with them
Join hands in the attempt?——

[*A Cry without, at some distance—the* SLAVES *start, and seem terrified.*

What cry was that?

2 *Slav.* 'Tis the complaint of wretched slaves, extorted
By bloody whips laid on without remorse,
And without cause—ere night perhaps from us,
And you, such cry may by such stripes be forc'd—

Abo. Ye gods! and shall we not resist it then!

Slaves. We will——

Abo. Your hands—at night we meet again.
Come on—now lead me to my task. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

Enter OROONOKO *and* BLANDFORD.

Oro. You know my story, and you say you are
A friend to my misfortunes: That's a name
Will teach you what you owe yourself and me.

Blan. I'll study to deserve to be your friend.
When once our noble Governor arrives,
With him you will not need my interest:
He is too generous not to feel your wrongs.
But be assur'd I will employ my pow'r,
And find the means to send you home again.
Oro. I thank you, sir.——My honest wretched friends! [*Sighing.*
Their chains are heavy: They have hardly found
So kind a master. May I ask you, sir.
What is become of them: Perhaps I should not.
You will forgive a stranger.
Blan. I'll inquire,
And use my best endeavours, where they are,
To have them gently us'd.
Oro. Once more I thank you.
You offer every cordial that can keep
My hopes alive, to wait a better day.
What friendly care can do, you have apply'd.
But oh! I have a grief admits no cure.
Blan. You do not know, sir——
Oro. Can you raise the dead?
Pursue and overtake the wings of time?
And bring about again the hours, the days,
The years that made me happy?
Blan. That is not to be done.
Oro. No, there is nothing to be done for me.
[*Kneeling and kissing the Earth.*
Thou god adored! thou ever glorious sun!
If she be yet on earth, send me a beam
Of thy all-seeing pow'r to light me to her!
Or if thy sister goddess has preferr'd
Her beauty to the skies, to be a star;
O tell me where she shines, that I may stand
Whole nights, and gaze upon her.
Blan. I am rude, and interrupt you.
Oro. I am troublesome:

But pray give me your pardon. My swoll'n heart
Bursts out its passage, and I must complain.
O! can you think of nothing dearer to me?
Dearer than liberty, my country, friends,
Much dearer than my life? That I have lost—
The tend'rest, best belov'd, and loving wife.

Blan. Alas! I pity you.

Oro. Do pity me:
Pity's a-kin to love; and every thought
Of that soft kind is welcome to my soul.
I would be pity'd here.

Blan. I dare not ask
More than you please to tell me: But, if you
Think it convenient to let me know
Your story, I dare promise you to bear
A part in your distress, if not assist you.

Oro. Thou honest-hearted man! I wanted such,
Just such a friend as thou art, that would sit
Still as the night, and let me talk whole days
Of my Imoinda. O! I'll tell thee all
From first to last; and pray observe me well.

Blan. I will most heedfully.

Oro. There was a stranger in my father's court,
Valu'd and honour'd much: He was a white,
The first I ever saw of your complexion:
Of many virtues, and so fam'd in arms,
He still commanded all my father's wars.
I was bred under him. One fatal day,
The armies joining, he before me stepp'd,
Receiving in his breast a poison'd dart
Levell'd at me; he dy'd within my arms.
I've tir'd you already.

Blan. Pray go on.

Oro. He left an only daughter, whom he brought
An infant to Angola. When I came
Back to the court, a happy conqueror
Humanity oblig'd me to condole

With this sad virgin for a father's loss,
Lost for my safety. I presented her
With all the slaves of battle, to atone
Her father's ghost. But when I saw her face,
And heard her speak, I offer'd up myself
To be the sacrifice. She bow'd and blush'd;
I wonder'd and ador'd. The sacred pow'r,
That had subdu'd me, then inspir'd my tongue,
Inclin'd her heart, and all our talk was love.

Blan. Then you were happy.

Oro. O! I was too happy.
I marry'd her: And tho' my country's custom
Indulg'd the privilege of many wives,
I swore myself never to know but her.
She grew with child, and I grew happier still.
O my Imoinda! But it could not last.
Her fatal beauty reach'd my father's ears:
He sent for her to court, where, cursed court,
No woman comes, but for his am'rous use.
He raging to possess her, she was forc'd
To own herself my wife. The furious King
Started at incest: But grown desperate,
Not daring to enjoy what he desir'd,
In mad revenge, which I could never learn,
He poison'd her, or sent her far, far off,
Far from my hopes ever to see her more.

Blan. Most barbarous of fathers! the sad tale
Has struck me dumb with wonder.

Oro. I have done.
I'll trouble you no farther: Now and then
A sigh will have its way: That shall be all.

Enter STANMORE.

Stan. Blandford, the Lieutenant Governor is gone
your plantation. He desires you will bring the
oyal Slave with you. The sight of his fair mistress

he says, is an entertainment for a prince; he would have his opinion of her.

Oro. Is he a lover?

Blan. So he says himself: He flatters a beautiful slave that I have, and calls her mistress.

Oro. Must he then flatter her to call her mistress? I pity the proud man, who thinks himself
Above being in love; What, tho' she be a slave,
She may deserve him.

Blan. You shall judge of that, when you see her, sir.

Oro. I go with you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Plantation.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR *following* IMOINDA.

Gov. I have disturb'd you, I confess my fault,
My fair Clemene; but begin again,
And I will listen to your mournful song,
Sweet as the soft complaining nightingale's,
While every note calls out my trembling soul,
And leaves me silent, as the midnight groves,
Only to shelter you;—sing, sing again,
And let me wonder at the many ways
You have to ravish me.

Imo. O, I can weep
Enough for you and me, if that will please you.

Gov. You must not weep: I come to dry your tears,
And raise you from your sorrow.

Imo. Can that be,
When all your actions, and your looks, convince me

That you wou'd keep me here, still far from those,
For whom the tears I shed must flow for ever?—
Gov. They must not sure—be all the past forgotten;—
Look forwards now, where better prospects rise,
New pleasures court you, and new friends invite.
Imo. Alas! can I—I know not what to say—
Nature has form'd you of a diff'rent kind,
Or thus you cou'd not talk; and shou'd I reason
From what I feel, you wou'd not understand me.
Gov. O, yes; my heart has all the soft sensations,
Has all, that friendship, and that love inspires—
Imo. Let your heart answer for me, then;—cou'd you,
Forc'd to some distant land, unknown, forlorn,
A slave, dependent on another's will,
Cut off from all that habit has endear'd,
Cut off from friendship, from domestic joy—
Could you forget all these?—Alas! they're past——
[*Bursts into Tears.*
Gov. O, fair Clemene! there is yet a passion
Which can obliterate all the joys and pains
That others have impress'd; make room for that,
And all I wish is done—look upon me:
Look with the eyes of kind indulging love,
That I may have full cause for what I say:
I come to offer you your liberty,
And be myself the slave. You turn away.
[*Following her.*
But every thing becomes you. I may take
This pretty hand: I know your modesty
Would draw it back: but you will take it ill,
If I should let it go, I know you would.
You shall be gently forc'd to please yourself;
That you will thank me for.
[*She struggles and gets her Hand from him, then he offers to kiss her.*

Nay, if you struggle with me, I must take——

Imo. You may my life, that I can part with freely.
[*Exit.*

Enter BLANDFORD, STANMORE, *and* OROONOKO.

Blan. So, Governor, we don't disturb you, I hope:
Your mistress has left you: You were making love;
She is thankful for the honour, I suppose.

Gov. Quite insensible to all I say and do:
When I speak to her, she sighs, or weeps,
But never answers me as I would have her.

Stan. There's something nearer than her slavery, that touches her.

Blan. What do her fellow slaves say of her; can't they find the cause?

Gov. Some of them, who pretend to be wiser than the rest, and hate her, I suppose for being used better than they are, will needs have it that she is with child.

Blan. Poor wretch! if it be so, I pity her:
She has lost a husband, who perhaps was dear
To her, and then you cannot blame her.

Oro. If it be so, indeed you cannot blame her.
[*Sighing.*

Gov. No, no; it is not so: If it be so,
I must still love her; and, desiring still,
I must enjoy her.

Blan. Try what you can do with fair means, and welcome.

Gov. I'll give you ten slaves for her.

Blan. You know she is our Lord Governor's: But if I could dispose of her, I would not now, especially to you.

Gov. Why not to me?

Blan. I mean against her will. You are in love with her;
And we all know what your desires would have:

Love stops at nothing but possession.
Were she within your pow'r, you do not know
How soon you would be tempted to forget
The nature of the deed, and, may be, act
A violence, you after would repent.

Oro. 'Tis godlike in you to protect the weak.

Gov. Fie, fie, I would not force her. Though she be a slave, her mind is free, and should consent.

Oro. Such honour will engage her to consent.
Shall we not see the wonder?

Gov. Have a care;
You have a heart, and she has conqu'ring eyes.

Oro. I have a heart: But if it could be false
To my first vows, ever to love again,
These honest hands should tear it from my breast,
And throw the traitor from me. O! Imoinda!
Living or dead, I can be only thine.

Blan. Imoinda was his wife: she's either dead,
Or living, dead to him; forc'd from his arms
By an inhuman father. Another time,
I'll tell you all. [*To the* GOVERNOR.

Stan. The slaves have done their work;
And now begins their evening merriment.

Blan. The men are all in love with fair Clemene
As much as you, and try their little tricks
To entertain her, and divert her sadness.
May be she is among them: Shall we see?

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

SLAVES, MEN, WOMEN, *and* CHILDREN, *upon the Ground; some rise and dance.*

Enter the LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, STANMORE, *and* OROONOKO, *as Spectators;* CAPTAIN DRIVER *and several* PLANTERS, *with their Swords drawn.*

A Bell rings.

Capt. Where are you, Governor? Make what haste you can
To save yourself and the whole colony.
I bade 'em ring the bell.

Gov. What's the matter?

1 *Plan.* The Indians are come down upon us: They have plunder'd some of the plantations already, and are marching this way as fast as they can.

Gov. What can we do against them?

Blan. We shall be able to make a stand, 'till more planters come in to us.

2 *Plan.* There are a great many more without, if you would show yourself, and put us in order.

Gov. There's no danger of the white slaves; they'll not stir. Blandford, come you along with me: some of you stay here to look after the black slaves.

[*All go out but the* CAPTAIN *and Six* PLANTERS, *who all at once seize* OROONOKO.

1 *Plan.* Ay, ay, let us alone.

Capt. In the first place, we secure you, sir,
As an enemy to the government.

Oro. Are you there, sir? You are my constant *friend.*

1 *Plan.* You will be able to do a great deal of mischief.

Capt. But we shall prevent you: Bring the irons hither. He has the malice of a slave in him, and would be glad to be cutting his masters' throats. I know him. Chain his hands and feet, that he may not run over to them. If they have him, they shall carry him on their backs, that I can tell them.

[*As they are chaining him,* BLANDFORD *enters, and runs to them.*

Blan. What are you doing there?

Capt. Securing the main chance: This is a bosom enemy.

Blan. Away, you brutes: I'll answer with my life for his behaviour; so tell the Governor.

Capt. & Plan. Well, sir, so we will.

[*Exeunt* CAPTAIN *and* PLANTERS.

Oro. Give me a sword, and I'll deserve your trust.

Enter the LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR *and* PLANTERS.

Blan. Hell and the devil! they drive away our slaves before our faces. Governor, can you stand tamely by, and suffer this? Clemene, sir, your mistress, is among them.

Gov We throw ourselves away, in the attempt to rescue them.

Oro. A lover cannot fall more glorious,
Than in the cause of love. He, that deserves
His mistress' favour, will not stay behind:
I'll lead you on, be bold, and follow me. [*Exeunt.*

Enter IMOINDA.

Imo. I'm tost about by my tempestuous fate,
And no where must have rest; Indians, or English!
Whoever has me, I am still a slave.
No matter whose I am, since I'm no more
My royal master's; since I'm his no more.
O, I was happy! nay, I will be happy,

In the dear thought that I am still his wife,
Though far divided from him.
[*Draws off to a Corner of the Stage.*

After a Shout, enter the LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, OROONOKO, BLANDFORD, STANMORE, *and the* PLANTERS.

Gov. Thou glorious man! thou something greater sure
Than Cæsar ever was! that single arm
Has sav'd us all: accept our general thanks.
[*All bow to* OROONOKO.
And what we can do more to recompense
Such noble services, you shall command.
Clemene too shall thank you——she is safe——
Look up, and bless your brave deliverer.
[*Brings* CLEMENE *forward, looking down on the Ground.*

Oro. Bless me indeed!

Blan. You start!

Oro. O, all you gods!
Who govern this great world, and bring about
Things strange, and unexpected, can it be?

Gov. What is't you stare at so?

Oro. Answer me, some of you; you who have pow'r,
And have your senses free: Or are you all
Struck thro' with wonder too?
[*Looking still fixed on her.*

Blan. What would you know?

Oro. My soul steals from my body thro' my eyes;
All that is left of life I'll gaze away,
And die upon the pleasure.

Gov. This is strange!

Oro. If you but mock me with her image here:
If she be not Imoinda——
[*She looks upon him, and faints; he runs to her.*

Ha! she faints!
Nay, then it must be she; it is Imoinda:
My heart confesses her, and leaps for joy,
To welcome her to her own empire here.
I feel her all, in ev'ry part of me.
O! let me press her in my eager arms,
Wake her to life, and with this kindling kiss
Give back that soul, she only lent to me. [*Kisses her.*
Imoinda! Oh! thy Oroonoko calls.
[IMOINDA *coming to Life.*
Imo. My Oroonoko! Oh! I can't believe
What any man can say. But, if I am
To be deceiv'd, there's something in that name,
That voice, that face—— [*Staring at him.*
O! if I know myself, I cannot be mistaken.
[*Runs and embraces* OROONOKO.
Oro. Never here:
You cannot be mistaken: I am yours,
Your Oroonoko, all that you would have,
Your tender loving husband.
Imo. All indeed
That I would have: My husband! then I am
Alive, and waking to the joys I feel:
They were so great, I could not think them true;
But I believe all that you say to me:
For truth itself and everlasting love
Grows in this breast, and pleasure in these arms.
Oro. Take, take me all: Inquire into my heart,
(You know the way to ev'ry secret there)
My heart the sacred treasury of love:
And if, in absence, I have misemploy'd
A mite from the rich store: If I have spent
A wish, a sigh, but what I sent to you;
May I be curs'd to wish, and sigh in vain,
And you not pity me.
Imo. O! I believe,
And know you by myself. If these sad eyes,

Since last we parted, have beheld the face
Of any comfort; or once wish'd to see
The light of any other Heav'n but you,
May I be struck this moment blind, and lose
Your blessed sight, never to find you more.

Oro. Imoinda! O, this separation
Has made you dearer, if it can be so,
Than you were ever to me. You appear
Like a kind star to my benighted steps,
To guide me on my way to happiness:
I cannot miss it now. Governor, friend,
You think me mad: But let me bless you all,
Who any way have been the instruments
Of finding her again. Imoinda's found!
And every thing that I would have in her.
[*Embracing her.*

Stan. Where's your mistress now, Governor?

Gov. Why, where most men's mistresses are forced to be sometimes,
With her husband, it seems! But I won't lose her so!
[*Aside.*

Stan. He has fought lustily for her, and deserves her. I'll say that for him.

Blan. Sir, we congratulate your happiness: I do most heartily. [*To* OROONOKO.

Gov. And all of us; but how comes it to pass——

Oro. That will require
More precious time than I can spare you now.
I have a thousand things to ask of her,
And she as many more to know of me.
But you have made me happier, I confess,
Acknowledge it, much happier, than I
Have words, or pow'r, to tell you. Captain, you,
Ev'n you, who most have wrong'd me, I forgive.
I will not say you have betray'd me now:
I'll think you but the minister of fate,
To bring me to my lov'd Imoinda here.

Imo. How, how shall I receive you; how be worthy

Of such endearments, all this tenderness?
These are the transports of prosperity,
When Fortune smiles upon us.
Oro. Let the fools,
Who follow Fortune, live upon her smiles.
All our prosperity is plac'd in love,
We have enough of that to make us happy.
This little spot of earth, you stand upon,
Is more to me than the extended plains
Of my great father's kingdom. Here I reign
In full delights, in joys to pow'r unknown;
Your love my empire, and your heart my throne.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A Plantation.

Enter ABOAN, *the Three* SLAVES, *and* HOTMAN.

Hot. What! to be slaves to cowards! slaves to rogues, who can't defend themselves!

Abo. Who is this man? he talks as if he were acquainted with our design: is he one of us?
[*Aside to his own Gang.*

1 *Slave.* Not yet: but he will be glad to make one, I believe.

Abo. I think so too, and may be worth the having.

Hot. Go, sneak in corners; whisper out your griefs,

For fear your masters hear you: Cringe and crouch
Under the bloody whip, like beaten curs,
That lick their wounds, and know no other cure.
All, wretches all! you feel their cruelty,
As much as I can feel, but dare not groan.
For my part, while I have a life and tongue,
I'll curse the authors of my slavery.

Abo. Have you been long a slave?

Hot. Yes, many years.

Abo. And do you only curse?

Hot. Curse! only curse! I cannot conjure,
To raise the spirits up of other men:
I am but one. O! for a soul of fire,
To warm, and animate our common cause,
And make a body of us, then I would
Do something more than curse.

Abo. That body set on foot, would you be one,
A limb, to lend it motion?

Hot. I would be
The heart of it; the head, the hand, and heart:
Would I could see the day!

Abo. This spirit pleases me, and I will trust him.—
[*Aside.*
The time may come to you; be ready for it.——

Enter BLANDFORD.

We're interrupted now—we'll meet anon.

Blan. If there be any one among you here
That did belong to Oroonoko, speak,
I come to him.

Abo. I did belong to him. Aboan my name.

Blan. You are the man I want; pray come with me. [*Exit all but* HOTMAN.

Hot. Yes, 'tis as I suspected——this Aboan
Has form'd some secret project to revolt;
My well-feign'd zeal has snar'd him, and he'll trust *me:*
Then welcome liberty!—not that I mean

To trust his cunning, or the chance of arms;
I have a nearer, safer way to freedom:
I'll learn the plot, and watch it step by step,
'Till on the verge of execution—then,
Just then, betray it; 'twill enhance the merit,
And make reward more ample and more sure.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Room.

Enter OROONOKO *and* IMOINDA.

Oro. I do not blame my father for his love:
'Twas Nature's fault that made you like the sun,
The reasonable worship of mankind:
He could not help his adoration.
But when I think on his barbarity,
That could expose you to so many wrongs;
Driving you out to wretched slavery,
Only for being mine; then I confess
I wish I could forget the name of son,
That I might curse the tyrant.

Imo. I will bless him,
For I have found you here: Heav'n only knows
What is reserv'd for us: But, if we guess
The future by the past, our fortune must
Be wonderful, above the common size
Of good or ill; it must be in extremes:
Extremely happy, or extremely wretched.

Oro. 'Tis in our pow'r to make it happy now.

Imo. But not to keep it so.

Enter BLANDFORD *and* ABOAN.

Blan. My royal lord!
I have a present for you.

Oro. Aboan!

Abo. Your lowest slave.
Oro. My try'd and valu'd friend.
This worthy man always prevents my wants:
I only wish'd, and he has brought thee to me.
Thou art surpris'd: Carry thy duty there:
[ABOAN *goes to* IMOINDA, *and falls at her Feet.*
While I acknowledge mine, how shall I thank you?
Blan. Believe me honest to your interest,
And I am more than paid. I have secur'd
That all your followers shall be gently us'd.
This gentleman, your chief favourite, sir,
Shall wait upon your person, while you stay
Among us.
Oro. I owe every thing to you.
Blan. You must not think you are in slavery.
Oro. I do not find I am.
Blan. Kind Heav'n has miraculously sent
Those comforts, that may teach you to expect
Its farther care, in your deliverance.
Oro. I sometimes think myself, Heav'n is concern'd
For my deliverance.
Blan. It will be soon;
You may expect it. Pray, in the mean time,
Appear as cheerful as you can among us.
You have some enemies, that represent
You dangerous, and would be glad to find
A reason, in your discontent, to fear:
They watch your looks. But there are honest men,
Who are your friends: You are secur'd in them.
Oro. I thank you for your caution.
Blan. I will leave you:
And be assur'd, I wish your liberty.
[*Exit* BLANDFORD.
Abo. He speaks you very fair.
Oro. He means me fair.
Abo. If he should not, my lord?
Oro. If he should not?

I'll not suspect his truth: But if I did,
What shall I get by doubting?
Abo. You secure
Yourself from disappointment: But besides,
There's this advantage in suspecting him:
When you put off the hopes of other men,
You will rely upon your god-like self:
And then you may be sure of liberty.
Oro. Be sure of liberty! what dost thou mean,
Advising to rely upon myself?
I think I may be sure on't: We must wait:
'Tis worth a little patience. [*Turning to* IMOINDA.
Abo. O, my lord!
Oro. What dost thou drive at?
Abo. Sir, another time
You would have found it sooner: But I see
Love has your heart, and takes up all your thoughts.
Oro. And canst thou blame me?
Abo. Sir, I must not blame you.
But, as our fortune stands, there is a passion
(Your pardon, royal mistress, I must speak)
That would become you better than your love:
A brave resentment; which, inspir'd by you,
Might kindle and diffuse a gen'rous rage
Among the slaves, to rouse and shake our chains,
And struggle to be free.
Oro. How can we help ourselves?
Abo. I knew you, when you wou'd have found a way.
How help ourselves! the very Indians teach us:
We need but to attempt our liberty,
And we carry it. We have hands sufficient,
Double the number of our master's force,
Ready to be employ'd. What hinders us
To set them then at work? We want but you,
To head our enterprize, and bid us strike.
Oro. What would you do?

Abo. Cut our oppressors' throats.

Oro. And you would have me join in your design
Of murder.

Abo. It deserves a better name:
But, be it what it will, 'tis justify'd
By self-defence, and natural liberty.

Oro. I'll hear no more on't.

Abo. I'm sorry for't.

Oro. Nor shall you think of it!

Abo. Not think of it!

Oro. No, I command you not.

Abo. Remember, sir,
You are a slave yourself, and to command
Is now another's right. Not think of it!
Since the first moment they put on my chains,
I've thought of nothing but the weight of them,
And how to throw them off: Can yours sit easy?

Oro. I have a sense of my condition,
As painful, and as quick, as yours can be.
I feel for my Imoinda and myself;
Imoinda, much the tenderest part of me.
But, though I languish for my liberty,
I would not buy it at the christian price
Of black ingratitude: They shall not say,
That we deserv'd our fortune by our crimes.
Murder the innocent!

Abo. The innocent!

Oro. These men are so, whom you would rise against.
If we are slaves, they did not make us slaves,
But bought us in the common way of trade.
They paid our price for us, and we are now
Their property, a part of their estate,
To manage as they please. Mistake me not,
I do not tamely say, that we should bear
All they could lay upon us: But we find
The load so light, so little to be felt,

(Considering they have us in their pow'r,
And may inflict what grievances they please)
We ought not to complain.
Abo. My royal lord!
You do not know the heavy grievances,
The toils, the labours, weary drudgeries,
Which they impose; burdens more fit for beasts,
For senseless beasts to bear, than thinking men.
Then if you saw the bloody cruelties
They execute on every slight offence;
Nay, sometimes in their proud, insulting sport,
How worse than dogs they lash their fellow creatures,
Your heart would bleed for them. Oh! could you know
How many wretches lift their hands and eyes
To you for their relief!
Oro. I pity them,
And wish I could with honesty do more.
Abo. You must do more, and may, with honesty.
O, royal sir, remember who you are,
A prince, born for the good of other men;
Whose godlike office is to draw the sword
Against oppression, and set free mankind:
And this I'm sure you think oppression now.
What tho' you have not felt those miseries,
Never believe you are oblig'd to them:
They have their selfish reasons, may be, now,
For using you so well: But there will come
A time, when you must have your share of them.
Oro. You see how little cause I have to think so.
Favour'd in my own person, in my friends;
Indulg'd in all that can concern my care,
In my Imoinda's soft society. [*Embracing her.*
Abo. And therefore would you lie contented down
In the forgetfulness, and arms of love,
To get young princes for them?

Oro. Say'st thou! ha!
Abo. Princes, the heirs of empire, and the last
Of your illustrious lineage, to be born
To pamper up their pride, and be their slaves?
Oro. Imoinda! save me, save me from that thought!
Imo. There is no safety from it: I have long
Suffer'd it with a mother's labouring pains;
And can no longer. Kill me, kill me now,
While I am blest, and happy in your love;
Rather than let me live to see you hate me:
As you must hate me: me, the only cause,
The fountain of these flowing miseries.
Oro. Shall the dear babe, the eldest of my hopes,
Whom I begot a prince, be born a slave?
The treasurer of this temple was design'd
T' enrich a kingdom's fortune: shall it here
Be seiz'd upon by vile unhallow'd hands,
To be employ'd in uses most profane?
Abo. In most unworthy uses; think of that;
And, while you may, prevent it. O, my lord,
Rely on nothing that they say to you.
They speak you fair, I know, and bid you wait:
But think what 'tis to wait on promises,
And promises of men who know no tie
Upon their words, against their interest:
And where's their interest in freeing you?
Imo. O! where indeed, to lose so many slaves?
Abo. Nay, grant this man, you think so much your friend,
Be honest, and intends all that he says;
He is but one; and in a government,
Where, he confesses, you have enemies,
That watch your looks. What looks can you put on,
To please these men, who are before resolv'd
To read them their own way? Alas, my lord!

If they incline to think you dangerous,
They have their knavish arts to make you so:
And then who knows how far their cruelty
May carry their revenge?

Imo. To every thing
That does belong to you, your friends, and me:
I shall be torn from you, forced away
Helpless and miserable: Shall I live
To see that day again?

Oro. That day shall never come.

Abo. I know you are persuaded to believe
The Governor's arrival will prevent
These mischiefs, and bestow your liberty:
But who is sure of that? I rather fear
More mischiefs from his coming. He is young,
Luxurious, passionate, and amorous:
Such a complexion, and made bold by power,
To countenance all he is prone to do,
Will know no bounds, no law against his lusts.
If, in a fit of his intemperance,
With a strong hand he shall resolve to seize,
And force my royal mistress from your arms,
How can you help yourself?

Oro. Ha! thou has rous'd
The lion in his den, he stalks abroad,
And the wide forest trembles at his roar.
I find the danger now: My spirits start
At the alarm, and from all quarters come
To man my heart, the citadel of love.
Is there a power on earth to force you from me?
And shall I not resist it?
Now I am fashion'd to thy purpose: speak,
What combination, what conspiracy,
Would'st thou engage me in? I'll undertake
All thou would'st have me now for liberty,
For the great cause of love and liberty.

Abo. Now, my great master, you appear yourself.

And, since we have you join'd in our design,
It cannot fail us. I have muster'd up
The choicest slaves, men who are sensible
Of their condition, and seem most resolv'd:
They have their several parties.
Oro. Summon them,
Assemble them: I will come forth and show
Myself among them: If they are resolv'd,
I'll lead their foremost resolutions.
Abo. I have provided those will follow you.
Oro. With this reserve in our proceedings still,
The means that lead us to our liberty
Must not be bloody.
Abo. In self-defence, my lord——
Oro. I know, I feel,
All thou canst say, and more—is there no way?
[*Pauses.*
Ye gods! 'tis inspiration! what a thought!
The very ship that brought, that made us slaves,
Swims in the river still—we'll seize on that,
And not a life shall fall—
Abo. And shall we then
Desert our honest, brave, unhappy friends!—
Blast all their hopes——
Oro. O! no, we'll go together;
Not one associate shall be left behind.
Abo. Why, farewell then revenge——it shall be so.—
We shall expect you, sir——
Oro. You shall not long.
[*Exeunt* OROONOKO, IMOINDA, *and* ABOAN.

SCENE III.

A Plantation.

Enter several SLAVES, *Conspirators.*

1 *Slav.* 'Tis about the time now, he'll be here soon.

2 *Slav.* Well, but what are we to do?

1 *Slav.* To do! why we are to be free.

2 *Slav.* Ay! 'twas lucky this Aboan came among us; when I look at him, and hear him talk, I think I'm free already.

3 *Slav.* Why, ay, to be sure; such men as he may do much.

2 *Slav.* Why, we were all such men, 'till slavery broke us.
But what is the project?

3 *Slav.* Why, we shall hear, we shall hear.

1 *Slav.* Ay, let Aboan alone; I'll warrant he'll put us in a way.

2 *Slav.* There's Hotman too; did you hear how he fir'd, when our tyrants ran away, and left us to the Indians.

1 *Slav.* Did I? ay—Hotman, in my opinion, has as much spirit as Aboan——here they are, coming together; let us draw back a little: See how earnestly they talk; don't let us interrupt them.

[*They retire to the Back of the Stage.*

Enter HOTMAN *and* ABOAN.

Abo. This is his scheme; I left him but this moment.

Hot. I like it not; a glorious feat indeed,
For souls of fire, provok'd by burning wrongs,
To seize a ship by night and steal away,
Our useless weapons slumb'ring in the sheath.
Confusion! and our suff'rings unreveng'd!

Abo. Indeed I thought of more; but is not freedom,
Without the chance of contest, worth acceptance?
Hot. I know not—to those frigid clods, perhaps;
To our pale lords, who only dare to strike
Whom others bind, it might—but not to me—
By all my wrongs, I thirst for more than freedom.
Abo. Thy noble ardour might e'en warm the dead?
We'll try once more its pow'r on Oroonoko——
But soft, here are our friends, and as I think
At distance comes the Prince—it must be he——
Welcome, my friends, the Prince is of your party,
[*Turning to the* SLAVES.
And has engaged to make your cause his own—
See where he comes——

Enter OROONOKO.

Here are our friends, my lord,
Who ask but your concurrence to be free.
Oro. If to all these I am the means of freedom,
'Tis well I was a slave—'tis well that here
I've learnt the wrongs you suffer.
Hot. 'Tis better not to be, than thus to suffer.
Abo. To die at once, than leave our wretched offspring
Heirs of the chains and scourges that——
Oro. No more——
My friend here tells me, you have well resolv'd,
[*To the* SLAVES.
To make one glorious effort to be free;
To risk your lives, and all the threefold woes
That would attend our unsuccessful contest.
[*The* SLAVES *look on each other, and answer Nothing.*
Hot. [*Clamorously.*] All, all we risk for freedom—and revenge!
[OROONOKO *turns quick, and looks earnestly at* HOTMAN.

Oro. [*After a Pause.*] 'Tis well! 'tis great! [*Turning to the Rest.*] But I have found the means
To gain our purpose by a safer way——

Hot. [*Interrupting.*] A safer!—let him talk of safer ways,
Who holds his life more dear than great revenge.

[OROONOKO *turns hastily again, and looks at* HOTMAN; *fixing his Eyes some time upon him, without speaking;*—HOTMAN *at length shows some Signs of Confusion:* OROONOKO *then turns and speaks to* ABOAN.

Oro. Is this the man, whose zeal you prais'd so much?

Abo. It is——

Hot. [*More confused.*] They whisper; yes, I am suspected;
I must talk louder still—— [*Aside.*

Oro. [*Still eyeing* HOTMAN.] And is he trusted with the whole design?

Abo. He is, my lord.

Oro. The marks of guilt are on him.

Abo. Not so, my lord——

Oro. Whence his confusion, then, to meet my eye?

Abo. Whence his confusion now, suppose him false?

Oro. Whence! from the consciousness of falsehood here,
That which makes villains start at their own shadow,
That made him fear my eye, though it could reach
No farther than the covering of his heart——
Ev'n now he trembles, and a sickly hue
Steals on his cheeks——

Abo. It does—yet try him farther.

Oro. To try him, now he's trusted, boots us nothing.

Abo. Do it, if only to restore our hope,
Or end the torments of suspense——
Oro. I will.——
Your zeal, my friend, I honour; but you know——
[*To* HOTMAN.
Hot. That nobler hopes have set my soul on fire,
Than just to steal a ship, and run away——
If I consent to this, ye gods!——
[*He affects to speak this loud, but his Voice falters through his Fear.*
Oro. If you do not consent, you will not sure——
Hot. I will not what?—Who is there that suspects me? [*In a great Confusion.*
[OROONOKO *looks at* ABOAN, *then turns again to* HOTMAN.
Oro. Suspects, my friend! Of what should we suspect you?
Abo. [*Hastily.*] By Heav'ns—if I suspected any present
Of a perfidious view to blast our hopes,
This dagger here at once should make him faithful.
[HOTMAN, *staring, attempts to speak; but is overcome by his Confusion and Terror.*
Oro. [*To* ABOAN.] What think you now?
Abo. By all my fears, a coward and a traitor.
Oro. He'll certainly betray us.
Abo. That he shall not:
For what I swore, I'll do——
Oro. What wilt thou do?
Abo. I'll stop his mouth before you; stab him here,
And then let him inform.
[*Going to stab* HOTMAN, OROONOKO *holds him;* HOTMAN, *who keeps his Eye upon them, perceives it with extreme Confusion, and after some irresolute Gestures, steals off unperceived.*

Oro. Thou art not mad——
Abo. I wou'd secure ourselves.
Oro. It shall not be this way,—it cannot be;
To murder him, is to alarm the rest.
[*Turns about, and misses* HOTMAN.
What, is he gone?——
Abo. [*To the* SLAVES.] Is Hotman gone?——
1 *Slav.* Hotman, my lord, is gone; but doubt him not, [*To* OROONOKO.
The stern inquiring look of majesty,
(We feel its pow'r) will strike the mind with awe:
He dar'd to differ, sir: But, when oppos'd,
He felt, confus'd, the diff'rence of his state——
Oro. Why, be it so——
My fellow-sufferers, and worthy friends;
To-morrow, early as the breaking day,
We rendezvous behind the citron grove;—
'Till then, farewell—— [*Exeunt* SLAVES.
Aboan!
Abo. My lord.
Oro. 'Twas better not to trust them with our fears,
Yet let them meet at a more early time;
Within this hour—and then, though Hotman's false,
We may succeed before we are betray'd——
Abo. We may——I'll after them and do it.
[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The GOVERNOR'S *House.*

Enter the LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR *and* HOTMAN.

Gov. To seize the ship, say you?
Hot. Ev'n so, my lord.
Gov. At what hour?
Hot. The hour I cannot tell.
Gov. Was you not trusted then?
Hot. I was, my lord; but he they call the Prince—
Gov. What, Oroonoko?
Hot. The same, my lord; a bloody-minded fellow;—
He and another took it in their heads
To think I was not quite the rogue I seem'd,
And if I had not left them, wou'd have stabb'd me.
Gov. Indeed——Well we must be before-hand with them——
Your honest service to the government
Shall be rewarded with your liberty. [*Pauses.*
Let's see——
Hot. [*Aside.*] Cou'd I have work'd them up to farther mischief,
My wages had been more. [*Retiring.*
Gov. Here, Hotman——harkye,

Let Captain Driver come to me this moment——
[*Exit* HOTMAN.
Why this is just the thing I wou'd have wish'd.
The laws now take this Oroonoko off,
And leave Imoinda mine—the ship secur'd,
His party will desert him, and with ease
I then may seize my prey.

Enter CAPTAIN DRIVER.

Captain, what hands have you on board to-night?

Capt. Not many; but enough to do the business.—I learnt it from the slave I met below.

Gov. I sent him, sir,——

Capt. I know it, Governor; and I have sent him with orders that the ship shou'd weigh, and stand from shore; 'tis doing, sir, ere now.

Gov. Your crew then, Captain, are not all on board?

Capt. No, no; I'll send them orders to be ready; They'll do for your Prince Oroonoko yet.

Gov. Well, Captain, I'll expect you; I shall order All the militia under arms directly,
Here on the platform.

Capt. You need not fear me. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

The Citron Grove.—Moonlight.

Enter OROONOKO, ABOAN, IMOINDA; SLAVES, WOMEN *and* CHILDREN *following.*

Oro. Come on, my friends! see, where the rising moon

Now shines upon our purpose! Let our march
At once be swift and silent, like her course;
The ship surpris'd, we triumph without conflict,
Nor mark our way to liberty with blood.
[*As* OROONOKO *is leading them out,*

Enter a SLAVE.

1 *Slav.* [*Prostrating himself before* OROONOKO.] My lord, my prince——

Oro. What would'st thou say? be brief.

1 *Slav.* The villain Hotman—

Abo. Ah!—

Oro. Well, what of him?—take courage—what of him?

1 *Slav.* My lord, I fear he has betray'd us.

Oro. Why?

1 *Slav.* From our last rendezvous, my lord, e'en now
I watch'd him to the Governor's; but there
He stay'd not long; I saw, as he came out,
He spoke to Captain Driver, and from him,
I watch'd him still; he hasted to the ship,
Which, now unmoor'd, lies farther from the shore;
The Captain and his crew are up in arms;
All the militia out, the place alarm'd:
They'll soon be here——

Oro. Why, we must meet them then; the iron hand
Of stern necessity, is now upon us;
And from the rack she drives us to our swords.
[*Draws.*
The women and the children fall behind,
Unfit for dangers, such as now approach us.
What will become of them!

[ABOAN, *who, during this Scene, expresses the utmost Anguish of Mind, by his Gestures and Deportment, at length comes forward, and prostrating himself before* OROONOKO, *takes his Foot and sets it upon his Head.*

Oro. Forbear—we're born to error;—let me raise thee——
I know thee faithful, therefore blame thee not.
Abo. O, my dear lord! my heart drops blood to think
My hasty eager fond credulity
Should let that slave's false seeming, thus undo us—
Oro. Name it no more——
Abo. 'Tis lost—'tis ruin'd—and by me!—but this—
[*He suddenly draws a Dagger, and offers to stab himself; but* OROONOKO *lays hold of his Hand.*
Oro. Hold!—now you wrong my design: Thus far
Thou'st only err'd;—but to desert me now
[*Wresting the Dagger from him.*
Wou'd be a crime indeed—I need thy help.
[*Turning to* IMOINDA.
Imoinda, you must not expose yourself:
Retire, my love; I almost fear for you.
Imo. I fear no danger:—Life, or death, I will
Enjoy with you.
1 *Slav.* [*Alarmed.*] They come, they come—I see them; they're upon us.
Oro. [*Putting himself before* IMOINDA.] My person is your guard.

Enter the LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, *with* HOTMAN *and his* RABBLE; CAPTAIN STANMORE *and his* MEN.

Abo. There is the villain that betray'd our cause;
His life is due to me. [*Advancing.*
Oro. Hold, you;—and you who come against us, hold!
I charge you in the general good to all,
And wish I could command you, to prevent
The bloody havoc of the murd'ring sword—

I would not urge destruction uncompell'd;
But, if you follow fate, you find it here.
Who first advances——

Enter the CAPTAIN, *with his* CREW.

Capt. Here, here, here they are, Governor:—
What, seize upon my ship!
Come, boys, fall on——
[*Advancing first,* OROONOKO *kills him.*
Oro. Thou art fall'n indeed;
Thy own blood be upon thee!
Gov. Rest it there.
He did deserve his death. Take him away.—
[*The Body removed.*
You see, sir, you, and those mistaken men,
Must be our witnesses, we do not come
As enemies, and thirsting for your blood.
If we desir'd your ruin, the revenge
Of our companion's death, had push'd it on.
But that we overlook, in a regard
To common safety, and the public good.
Oro. Regard that public good:—Draw off your men,
And leave us to our fortune: We're resolv'd.
Gov. Resolv'd! on what? your resolutions
Are broken, overturn'd, prevented, lost:
What fortune now can you raise out of them?
Nay, grant we should draw off, what can you do?
Where can you move? What more can you resolve?
Unless it be to throw yourselves away.
Famine must eat you up, if you go on.
You see, our numbers could with ease compel
What we request:—And what do we request?
Only to save yourselves.
[*The* WOMEN, *with their* CHILDREN, *gathering about the* MEN.

Oro. I'll hear no more.

Gov. To those poor wretches, who have been seduc'd
And led away, to all, and ev'ry one,
We offer a full pardon——

Oro. Then fall on. [*Preparing to engage.*

Gov. Lay hold upon't, before it be too late;
Pardon and mercy.

[*The* MEN *leave* OROONOKO, *and fall upon their Faces, crying out for Pardon.*

Slaves. Pardon—mercy—pardon!

Oro. Let them go all. Now, Governor, I see,
I own, the folly of my enterprise,
The rashness of this action; and must blush,
Quite through this veil of night, a whitely shame,
To think I could design to make those free,
Who were by nature slaves; wretches, design'd
To be their masters' dogs, and lick their feet.
We were too few before for victory,
We're still enow to die.

[*To* IMOINDA, ABOAN, *and his* FRIENDS.

Enter BLANDFORD.

Gov. Live, royal sir;
Live, and be happy long, on your own terms;
Only consent to yield, and you shall have
What terms you can propose, for you, and yours.

Oro. Consent to yield! Shall I betray myself?

Blan. I'm glad you have proceeded by fair means;

[*To the* GOVERNOR.

I came to be a mediator.

Gov. Try what you can work upon him.

Oro. Are you come against me too?

Blan. Is this to come against you?

[*Offering his Sword to* OROONOKO.

Unarm'd to put myself into your hands?
I come, I hope, to serve you.

Oro. You have serv'd me;
I thank you for't: and I am pleas'd to think
You were my friend, while I had need of one:
But now 'tis past:—this farewell, and begone.
[*Embraces him.*

Blan. It is not past, and I must serve you still.
I would make up these breaches, which the sword
Will widen more, and close us all in love.

Oro. I know what I have done, and I should be
A child, to think they ever can forgive.
Forgive! Were there but that, I would not live
To be forgiven:—Is there a power on earth,
That I can ever need forgiveness from?

Blan. You shall not need it.

Oro. No, I will not need it.

Blan. You see, he offers you your own conditions,
For you, and yours.

Oro. Must I capitulate?
Precariously compound, on stinted terms,
To save my life?

Blan. Sir, he imposes none.
You make them for your own security.
If your great heart cannot descend to treat,
In adverse fortune, with an enemy,
Yet sure your honour's safe, you may accept
Offers of peace and safety from a friend?

Gov. He will rely on what you say to him:
[*To* BLANDFORD.
Offer him what you can, I will confirm
And make all good: Be you my pledge of trust.

Blan. I'll answer with my life for all he says.

Gov. Ay, do, and pay the forfeit if you please.
[*Aside.*

Blan. Consider, sir, can you consent to throw
That blessing from you, you so hardly found,
[*Of* IMOINDA.
And so much valu'd once.

Oro. Imoinda! oh!
'Tis she, that holds me on this argument
Of tedious life: I could resolve it soon,
Were this curs'd being only in debate.
But my Imoinda struggles in my soul:
She makes a coward of me, I confess:
I am afraid to part with her in death;
And more afraid of life to lose her here.
Blan. This way you must lose her; think upon
The weakness of her sex, made yet more weak
With her condition, requiring rest,
And soft indulging ease, to nurse your hopes,
And make you a glad father.
Oro. There I feel
A father's fondness, and a husband's love.
They seize upon my heart, strain all its strings
To pull me to them from my stern resolve.
Husband and father! all the melting art
Of eloquence lives in those soft'ning names.
Methinks I see the babe, with infant hands,
Pleading for life, and begging to be born:
Shall I forbid his birth? Deny him light?
The heavenly comforts of all cheering light?
These are the calls of nature, that call loud;
They will be heard, and conquer in their cause:
He must not be a man, who can resist them.
No, my Imoinda! I will venture all
To save thee, and that little innocent:
The world may be a better friend to him,
Than I have found it. Now I yield myself:
[*Gives up his Sword.*
The conflict's past, and we are in your hands.
[*Several* MEN *get about* OROONOKO *and* ABOAN, *and seize them.*
Gov. So you shall find you are.——Dispose of them,
As I commanded you.
Blan. Good Heav'n forbid! you cannot mean—

Gov. This is not your concern.
[*To* BLANDFORD, *who goes hastily to* STANMORE.
Blan. For Heav'n's sake use your int'rest with him, Stanmore.
Gov. I must take care of you. [*To* IMOINDA.
Imo. I'm at the end
Of all my care: Here will I die with him.
[*Holding* OROONOKO.
Oro. You shall not force her from me.
[*He holds her.*
Gov. Then I must [*They force her from him.*
Try other means, and conquer force by force:
Break, cut off his hold, bring her away.
Stan. Dear Governor, consider what you do.
Gov. Away——
Imo. I do not ask to live, kill me but here.
Oro. O bloody dogs! Inhuman murderers!
[IMOINDA *forc'd out of one Door by the* GOVERNOR *and Others.* OROONOKO *and* ABOAN, *out of another.* [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

GOVERNOR'S *House.*

Enter the LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, *with* BLANDFORD, *and* STANMORE.

Blan. Have you no reverence of future fame?
No awe upon your actions, from the tongues,

The censuring tongues of men, that will be free?
If you confess humanity, believe
There is a God, to punish or reward
Our doings here: Do not provoke your fate.
Gov. Tell me no more of fame, and breach of faith,
The public good requires that he should die.
Stan. The public good must totter, when the base
Is fraud, and craft, and prostituted honour.
Blan. When guilt is sanctified by bold pretences
That wrong is in its consequences right,
The bond that holds society together
Is broken! Rule and order at an end,
And anarchy must desolate the world.
Gov. The planters hold not these opinions, sir;
They think it well that bloodshed was prevented
By any means, and now are clamorous
To have this slave cut off——
Blan. We are not sure, so wretched, to have these,
The rabble, judge for us: The changing crowd,
The arbitrary guard of fortune's power,
Who wait to catch the sentence of her frowns,
And hurry all to ruin she condemns.
Stan. So far from farther wrongs, that 'tis a shame
He should be where he is. Good Governor,
Order his liberty: He yielded up
Himself, his all.
Blan. He yielded on your word;
And I am made the cautionary pledge,
The gage and hostage of your keeping it.
Remember, sir, he yielded on your word;
Your word!—Which honest men will think should be
The last resort of truth, and trust on earth:
You cannot sure persist in such an act,
And be sedately cruel and perfidious——

Stan. Besides, the wretch has now no longer pow'r
Of doing harm, were he dispos'd to use it.
Blan. But he is not dispos'd.
Stan. We'll be his sureties, sir.
Blan. Yes, we will answer for him now, my friend, the Governor, I know will thank us.
Gov. Well, you will have it so, do what you please; just what you will with him, I give you leave.
[*Exit.*
Blan. We thank you, sir; this way, pray come with me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

OROONOKO *discovered upon his Back, his Legs and Arms stretched out, and chained to the Ground.*

Enter BLANDFORD STANMORE, *&c.*

Blan. O miserable sight! help every one,
Assist me all to free him from his chains.
[*They help him up, and bring him forward, looking down.*
Most injured prince! how shall we clear ourselves?
Stan. We are not guilty of your injuries,
No way consenting to them; but abhor,
Abominate, and loath this cruelty.
Oro. If you would have me think you are not all
Confederates, all accessary to
The base injustice of your Governor;
If you would have me live, as you appear
Concern'd for me; if you would have me live
To thank, and bless you, there is yet a way
To tie me ever to your honest love:

Bring my Imoinda to me; give me her,
To charm my sorrows, and, if possible,
I'll sit down with my wrongs; never to rise
Against my fate, or think of vengeance more.
Blan. Be satisfy'd, you may depend upon us;
We'll bring her safe to you, and suddenly.
In the mean time
Endeavour to forget, sir, and forgive;
And hope a better fortune.
[*Exeunt* BLANDFORD, STANMORE, &c.
Oro. Forget! forgive! I must indeed forget,
When I forgive: But while I am a man,
In flesh, that bears the living marks of shame,
The print of his dishonourable chains,
I never can forgive this Governor,
This villain;
What shall I do? If I declare myself,
I know him, he will sneak behind his guard
Of followers, and brave me in his fears.
Else, lion-like, with my devouring rage,
I would rush on him, fasten on his throat,
Tear a wide passage to his treacherous heart,
And that way lay him open to the world. [*Pausing.*
If I should turn his christian arts on him,
Promise him, speak him fair, flatter, and creep
With fawning steps, to get within his faith,
I could betray him then, as he has me.
But am I sure by that to right myself?
Lying's a certain mark of cowardice:
And, when the tongue forgets its honesty,
The heart and hand may drop their functions too,
And nothing worthy be resolv'd or done.
Honour should be concern'd in honour's cause,
Let me but find out
An honest remedy, I have the hand,
A ministring hand, that will apply it home. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The GOVERNOR'S *House.*

Enter the LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, BLANDFORD, *and* STANMORE.

Gov. [*Impatiently.*] Well, what's the matter now?

Blan. I'm sorry we intrude, sir; but our bus'ness
Will quickly be despatch'd: We come to seek
Clemene, sir; we've promis'd Oroonoko
To bring her to him.

Gov. You do very well; 'tis kindly done of you:
Ev'n carry her to him with all my heart.

Stan. You must tell us where she is.

Gov. I tell you! why, don't you know?

Blan. Your servant says she's in the house.

Gov. No, no; I brought her home at first, indeed; but I thought it would not look well to keep her here; I remov'd her in the hurry, only to take care of her. What! she belongs to you: I have nothing to do with her!

Stan. But where is she now, sir?

Gov. Why, faith, I can't say certainly: you'll hear of her at Parham House, I suppose: there, or thereabouts; I think I sent her there.

Blan. I'll have an eye on him. [*Aside.*

[*Exeunt all but the* GOVERNOR.

Gov. I have ly'd myself into a little time,
And must employ it: they'll be here again;
But I must be before them.

[*Going out, he meets* IMOINDA, *and seizes her.*

Are you come?
I'll court no longer for a happiness

That is in my own keeping: You may still
Refuse to grant, so I have power to take.
The man that asks, deserves to be deny'd.

Enter BLANFORD *behind him.*

Imo. He does indeed, that asks unworthily.
Blan. You hear her sir; that asks unworthily.
Gov. You are no judge.
Blan. I am of my own slave.
Gov. Be gone, and leave us.
Blan. When you let her go.
Gov. To fasten upon you.
Imo. Help! murder! help!
Gov. She shall not 'scape me so. I've gone too far,
Not to go farther. Curse on my delay;
But yet she is, and shall be in my power.
Blan. Nay, then it is the war of honesty;
I know you, and will save you from yourself.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Enter OROONOKO.

Oro. To honour bound! and yet a slave to love!
I am distracted by their rival powers,
And both will be obey'd. O, great revenge!
Thou raiser and restorer of fall'n fame!
Let me not be unworthy of thy aid,
For stopping in thy course: I still am thine;
But can't forget I am Imoinda's too.
She calls me from my wrongs to rescue her.
No man condemn me, who has never felt

A woman's power, or try'd the force of love:
Love, love will be
My first ambition, and my fame the next.

Enter ABOAN, *bloody.*

Aboan!
My ever faithful friend!
Abo. I have no name
That can distinguish me from the vile earth,
To which I'm going: A poor abject worm,
That crawl'd a while upon the bustling world,
And now am trampled to my dust again.
Oro. I see thee gash'd and mangled.
Abo. Spare my shame, [*He lies down.*
To tell how they have us'd me: But believe
The hangman's hand would have been merciful.
Do not you scorn me, sir, to think I can
Intend to live under this infamy.
I do not come for pity, but for pardon.
Oro. For pardon! wound me not with keener anguish
Than yet I feel, by thinking thou canst need it:
Thou'st spent an honourable life with me;
The earliest servant of my rising fame.
[*Stooping and embracing him.*
Abo. And would attend it with my latest care:
My life was yours, and so shall be my death.
You must not live; alas! you must not live——
Bending and sinking, I have dragg'd my steps
Thus far, to tell you that you cannot live:
To warn you of those ignominious wrongs,
Whips, rods, and all the instruments of death,
Which I have felt, and are prepar'd for you.
This was the duty that I had to pay.
'Tis done, and now I beg to be discharg'd.
Oro. What shall I do for thee?
Abo. My body tires,

And will not bear me off to liberty:
I shall again be taken, made a slave.
A sword, a dagger yet would rescue me.
I have not strength to go to find out death;
You must direct him to me.
Oro. Here he is, [*Gives him a Dagger.*
The only present I can make thee now:
And, next the honourable means of life,
I would bestow the honest means of death.
Abo. I cannot stay to thank you. Only this,
The villain Hotman, as I stagger'd hither,
Arm'd with a sword I met: I wrench'd it from him,
Collecting all my strength; and in his heart,
Stain'd to the hilt, I left it.
O, my dear honour'd master, if there is
A being after this, I shall be yours
In the next world; your faithful slave again.
This is to try. [*Stabs himself.*
I will not say, farewell;
For you must follow me. [*Dies.*
Oro. In life and death,
The guardian of my honour! Follow thee!
I should have gone before thee: then perhaps
Thy fate had been prevented.
Why, why, you gods! why am I so accurs'd,
That it must be a reason of your wrath;
A guilt, a crime sufficient to the fate
Of any one, but to belong to me?
My friend has found it, and my wife will soon:
My wife! the very fear's too much for life:
I can't support it. Where? Imoinda! Oh!
[*Going out, she meets him, running into his Arms.*
Thou bosom softness! down of all my cares!
Thou art disorder'd, pale, and out of breath!

If fate pursues thee, find a shelter here.
What is it thou would tell me?
Imo. 'Tis in vain to call him villain.
Oro. Call him Governor: is it not so?
Imo. There's not another sure so great.
Oro. Villain's the common name of mankind here,
But his most properly. What! what of him?
I fear to be resolv'd, and must inquire.
He had thee in his power?
Imo. I blush to think it.
Oro. Blush! to think what?
Imo. That I was in his power.
Oro. He could not use it?
Imo. What can't such men do?
Oro. But did he, durst he?
Imo. What he cou'd he dar'd.
Oro. His own gods damn him then! for ours have none,
No punishment for such unheard of crime.
Imo. This monster, cunning in his flatteries,
When he had weary'd all his useless arts,
Leap'd out, fierce as a beast of prey, to seize me.
I trembled, fear'd.
Oro. I fear, and tremble now.
What cou'd preserve thee? what deliver thee?
Imo. That worthy man, you us'd to call your friend.
Oro. Blandford.
Imo. Came in, and sav'd me from his rage.
Oro. He was a friend indeed, to rescue thee!
And, for his sake, I'll think it possible
A christian may be yet an honest man.
Imo. O, did you know what I have struggled through,
To save me yours, sure you would promise me
Never to see me forc'd from you again.

Oro. To promise thee! O! do I need to promise?
But there is now no farther use of words.
Death is security for all our fears.
[*Shows* ABOAN's *Body on the Floor.*
Imo. Aboan!
Oro. Mangled and torn, resolv'd to give me time
To fit myself for what I must expect,
Groan'd out a warning to me, and expir'd.
Imo. For what you must expect?
Oro. Would that were all!
Imo. What! to be butcher'd thus——
Oro. Just as thou seest.
Imo. By barb'rous hands, to fall at last their prey!
Oro. I have run the race with honour, shall I now
Lag, and be overtaken at the goal?
Imo. No.
Oro. I must look back to thee. [*Tenderly.*
Imo. You shall not need.
I'm always present to your purpose; say,
Which way you would dispose me?
Oro. Have a care.
Thou'rt on a precipice, and dost not see
Whither that question leads thee.
I cannot, as I would, dispose of thee;
And, as I ought, I dare not. Oh, Imoinda!
Imo. Alas! that sigh! Why do you tremble so?
Nay, then 'tis bad indeed, if you can weep.
Oro. My heart runs over, if my gushing eyes
Betray a weakness which they never knew,
Believe, thou only, thou could'st cause these tears·
The gods themselves conspire with faithless men
To our destruction.
Imo. Heav'n and earth our foes!
If Heav'n could be appeas'd, these cruel men
Are not to be entreated or believ'd;
O! think on that, and be no more deceiv'd.

Oro. But we were born to suffer.
Imo. Suffer both,
Both die, and so prevent them.
Oro. By thy death!
O! let me hunt my travell'd thoughts again;
Range the wide waste of desolate despair;
Start any hope. Alas! I lose myself,
'Tis pathless, dark, and barren all to me.
Thou art my only guide, my light of life,
And thou art leaving me: send out thy beams
Upon the wing; let them fly all around,
Discover every way: is there a dawn,
A glimmering of comfort? The great god,
That rises on the world, must shine on us.
Imo. And see us set before him.
Oro. Thou bespeak'st,
And goest before me.
Imo. So I would in love,
In the dear unsuspected part of life,
In death for love. Alas! what hopes for me?
I was preserv'd but to acquit myself,
To beg to die with you.
Oro. Which is the way?
Imo. The God of Love is blind, and cannot find it.
But quick, make haste, our enemies have eyes,
To find us out, and show us the worst way
Of parting: think on them.
Oro. Why dost thou wake me?
Imo. O! no more of love.
For, if I listen to you, I shall quite
Forget my dangers, and desire to live.
I can't live yours. [*Takes up the Dagger.*
Oro. There all the stings of death
Are shot into my heart—what shall I do?
Imo. This dagger will instruct you. [*Gives it him.*
Oro. Ha! this dagger,
Like fate, appoints me to the horrid deed.

Imo. Strike, strike it home, and bravely save us both.
here is no other safety.
Oro. It must be——
ut first a dying kiss—— [*Kisses her.*
his last embrace —— [*Embraces her.*
nd now——
Imo. I'm ready.
Oro. O! where shall I strike?
there the smallest grain of that lov'd body,
hat is not dearer to me than my eyes,
ly bosom'd heart, and all the life-blood there?
id me cut off these limbs, hew off these hands,
ig out these eyes, tho' I would keep them last
o gaze upon thee: but to murder thee!
he joy, and charm of every ravish'd sense,
ly wife! forbid it, Nature.
Imo. 'Tis your wife,
'ho on her knees conjures you. O! in time
revent those mischiefs that are falling on us.
ou may be hurry'd to a shameful death,
nd I too dragg'd to the vile Governor;
hen I may cry aloud: when you are gone,
'here shall I find a friend again to save me?
Oro. It will be so. Thou unexampled virtue!
hy resolution has recover'd mine:
nd now prepare thee.
Imo. Thus, with open arms,
welcome you, and death.
[*He drops his Dagger as he looks on her, and throws himself on the Ground.*
Oro. I cannot bear it.
, let me dash against the rock of fate,
ig up this earth, tear, tear her bowels out,
o make a grave, deep as the centre down,
o swallow wide, and bury us together.
will not be. O! then some pitying god

(If there be one a friend to innocence)
Find yet a way to lay her beauties down
Gently in death, and save me from her blood.
Imo. O, rise; 'tis more than death to see you thus.
I'll ease your love, and do the deed myself——
[*She takes up the Dagger; he rises in haste, to take it from her.*
Oro. O! hold; I charge thee, hold.
Imo. Tho', I must own,
It would be nobler for us both from you.
Oro. O! for a whirlwind's wing to hurry us
To yonder cliff, which frowns upon the flood:
That in embraces lock'd we might plunge in,
And perish thus in one another's arms.
Imo. Alas! what is that I hear?
Oro. I see them coming.
They shall not overtake us. This last kiss,
And now farewell.
Imo. Farewell; farewell for ever.
Oro. I'll turn my face away, and do it so.
Now, are you ready?
Imo. Now. But do not grudge me
The pleasure in my death of a last look;
Pray, look upon me——Now I'm satisfied.
Oro. So fate must be by this.
[*Going to stab her, he stops short; she lays her Hand on his, in order to give the Blow.*
Imo. Nay, then I must assist you.
Thus, thus 'tis finish'd, and I bless my fate,
[*Stabs herself.*
That, where I liv'd, I die in these lov'd arms. [*Dies.*
Oro. She's gone. And now all's at an end with me,
Soft, lay her down; O, we will part no more.
[*Throws himself by her.*

But let me pay the tribute of my grief,
A few sad tears to thy lov'd memory,
And then I follow—— [*Weeps over her.*
But I stay too long. [*A Noise again.*
The noise comes nearer. Hold; before I go,
There's something would be done. It shall be so,
And then, Imoinda, I'll come all to thee. [*Rises.*

Enter BLANDFORD *and his Party, before the* GOVERNOR *and his Party; Swords drawn on both Sides.*

Gov. You strive in vain to save him; he shall die.
Blan. Not while we can defend him with our lives.
Gov. Where is he?
Oro. Here's the wretch, whom you would have.
Put up your swords, and let not civil broils
Engage you in the cursed cause of one,
Who cannot live, and now entreats to die.
This object will convince you.
Blan. 'Tis his wife! [*They gather about the Body.*
Alas! there was no other remedy.
Gov. Who did the bloody deed?
Oro. The deed was mine:
Bloody I know it is, and I expect
Your laws should tell me so. Thus, self-condemn'd,
I do resign myself into your hands,
The hands of justice——But I hold the sword—
For you——and for myself.
[*Stabs the* GOVERNOR *and himself, then throws himself by* IMOINDA'S *Body.*
Oro. 'Tis as it should be now; I have sent his ghost
To be a witness of that happiness
In the next world, which he deny'd us here. [*Dies.*
Blan. I hope there is a place of happiness
In the next world for such exalted virtue.

Pagan or unbeliever, yet he liv'd
To all he knew: and, if he went astray,
There's mercy still above to set him right.
But christians, guided by the heav'nly ray,
Have no excuse if they mistake their way.

[*Exeunt.*

THE END.

DISTRESSED MOTHER

ANDROMACHE. OH DO NOT SIR DIVIDE ME FROM MY CHILD!
ACT III. SCENE I.

Painted by Howard *Published by Longman & Co.* *Engraved by C. Heath.*

THE

DISTRESSED MOTHER;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By AMBROSE PHILIPS.

from
Jean Baptiste Racine

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE AND COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

WILLIAM SAVAGE, PRINTER,
LONDON.

REMARKS.

This tragedy is a translation from Racine, a French poet of the highest celebrity, who lived in the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth; and who, in the possession of wealth, and the enjoyment of fame, died of chagrin, occasioned by the king's displeasure at a memorial he addressed to his majesty, written with infinite eloquence, upon the miseries of the people.

Ambrose Philips, the translator of this favourite play, has been more successful than dramatic translators generally are. The French and the English stages differ so essentially, that every drama requires great alteration, before it can please a London audience, although it has previously charmed the audience of Paris.

The gloomy mind of a British auditor demands a bolder and more varied species of theatrical amusement, than the lively spirits of his neighbours in France. The former has no attention, no curiosity, till roused by some powerful fable, intricate occurrences, and all the interest which variety creates—whilst the latter will quietly sit, absorbed in their own glowing fancy, to hear speeches after speeches, of long narration, nor wish to see any thing performed, so they are but told, that something has been done.

" The Distressed Mother" partakes of the common quality of French dramas in this respect—much more is described to the audience than they see executed: but every recital is here in the highest degree interesting; and the dignity of the persons introduced on the stage seems to forbid all violence of action, which might endanger their respective grandeur.

The mere falling on the knee, by Andromache, when she exclaims to her victor—

" Behold how low you have reduc'd a queen !"

is perhaps more affecting, more admirable, in the character of a mother, haughty, like the Queen of the Trojans, than any event which could have occurred in the play, than any heroic deed which, either in grief or in rage, she could have performed.

The love of Hermione for Pyrrhus, founded on ambition, is, again, as natural a representation of that love, which but too often governs the heart of woman, as could be given: and Orestes, doting with fondness, the more he finds she, whom he loves, loves another, is equally as true a picture of this well-known passion, as it rules over the heart of man.

Frequently as this tragedy has been acted, and much as it has been approved by an English audience, it will still gain more favour with a reader than a spectator. Imagination can give graces, charms, and majesty, to Hector's widow, and all the royal natives of Troy and Greece, which their representatives cannot always so completely bestow; and, as the

work is chiefly narrative, reading answers the same purpóse as to listen.

The attraction of this play, on its first appearance in England, was, by some critics, ascribed to the exertions of the translator's friends. Steele, who wished well to Philips, devoted a whole paper of his "Spectator" to the praise of the piece, even before it was acted; and continued his encomiums afterwards, to the no small reputation of the English author.

This Ambrose Philips was a gentleman well known for having a number of warm friends, and implacable enemies; and it is supposed that the imprudent eulogiums of the one often did him as much injury, as the malicious animadversions of the other. The writers in "The Spectator" were, however, of too judicious a class to praise him into ridicule without intending it; and, no doubt, they aided the popularity of his play.

But with all the reputation Mr. Philips acquired by "The Distressed Mother," and two other tragedies, of which he was the original author, his name is better known to the world as a pastoral poet, than as a dramatist. He is still more remembered as the pretended rival of Pope in his rural poetry; and as a man whom Pope hated, even beyond his ordinary bounds of pettish spleen.

The paper war, which Mr. Ambrose Philips held, through life, with his literary antagonists, did not, however, shorten his days; for he survived every effort of his enemies to make his existence burthensome, *till the age of* seventy-eight,—and died in 1749.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	DRURY LANE.	COVENT GARDEN.
PYRRHUS	*Mr. Barrymore.*	*Mr. C. Kemble.*
ORESTES	*Master Betty.*	*Mr. Kemble.*
PYLADES	*Mr. Holland.*	*Mr. Brunton.*
PHŒNIX	*Mr. Dormer.*	*Mr. Chapman.*
HERMIONE	*Mrs. Powell.*	*Mrs. Siddons.*
ANDROMACHE	*Mrs. Ansell.*	*Mrs. Litchfield.*
CLEONE	*Miss Boyce.*	*Mrs. Beverley.*
Cephisa	*Miss Tidswell.*	*Mrs. Humphries.*

OFFICERS *and* SOLDIERS.

SCENE—The Court of PYRRHUS, *at Buthrotos, the capital City of Epirus.*

THE

DISTRESSED MOTHER.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

The Palace of PYRRHUS.

ORESTES, PYLADES, *and* ATTENDANTS.

Ores. O Pylades! what's life without a friend!
At sight of thee my gloomy soul cheers up,
My hopes revive, and gladness dawns within me.
After an absence of six tedious moons,
How could I hope to find my Pylades,
My joy, my comfort, on this fatal shore!
Even in the court of Pyrrhus! in these realms,
These hated realms, so cross to all my wishes!
Oh, my brave friend! may no blind stroke of fate
Divide us more, and tear me from myself!
Pyl. Oh, prince! Oh, my Orestes! Oh, my friend!—
Thus let me speak the welcome of my heart.
[*Embracing.*
Since I have gain'd this unexpected meeting,
Bless'd be the powers that barr'd my way to Greece,
And kept me here! ever since the unhappy day,

When warring winds (Epirus full in view)
Sunder'd our barks on the loud stormy main.
Ores. It was, indeed, a morning full of horror!
Pyl. A thousand boding cares have rack'd my soul
In your behalf. Often, with tears, I mourn'd
The fatal ills, to which your life's involv'd;
And grudg'd you dangers which I could not share.
I fear'd to what extremities the black despair,
That prey'd upon your mind, might have betray'd you;
And lest the gods, in pity to your woes,
Should hear your prayers, and take the life you loath'd.
But now with joy I see you!—The retinue,
And numerous followers, that surround you here,
Speak better fortunes, and a mind dispos'd
To relish life.
Ores. Alas, my friend! who knows
The destiny, to which I stand reserv'd!
I come in search of an inhuman fair;
And live or die, as she decrees my fate.
Pyl. You much surprise me, prince!—I thought you cur'd
Of your unpity'd, unsuccessful, passion.
Why, in Epirus, should you hope to find
Hermione less cruel, than at Sparta?
I thought her pride, and the disdainful manner
In which she treated all your constant sufferings,
Had broke your fetters, and assur'd your freedom:
Asham'd of your repulse, and slighted vows,
You hated her; you talk'd of her no more:
Prince, you deceiv'd me!
Ores. I deceiv'd myself.
Do not upbraid the unhappy man, that loves thee.
Thou know'st I never hid my passion from thee:
Thou saw'st it, in its birth, and in its progress;
And when, at last, the hoary king, her father,
Great Menelaus, gave away his daughter,
His lovely daughter, to the happy Pyrrhus,
Th'avenger of his wrongs, thou saw'st m grief,

My torture, my despair.
Oh, Pylades! my heart has bled within me,
To see thee, press'd with sorrows not thy own,
Still wand'ring with me, like a banish'd man,
Watchful, and anxious for thy wretched friend,
To temper the wild transports of my mind,
And save me from myself.
Pyl. Why thus unkind?
Why will you envy me the pleasing task
Of generous love, and sympathizing friendship?
Ores. Thou miracle of truth!—But hear me on.
When, in the midst of my disastrous fate,
I thought how the divine Hermione,
Deaf to my vows, regardless of my plaints,
Gave up herself, and all her charms, to Pyrrhus;
Thou may'st remember, I abhorr'd her name,
Strove to forget her, and repay her scorn.
I made my friends, and even myself, believe
My soul was freed. Alas! I did not see,
That all the malice of my heart was love.
Triumphing thus, and yet a captive still,
In Greece I landed, and in Greece I found
The assembled princes all alarm'd with fears,
In which their common safety seem'd concern'd.
I join'd them: for I hop'd that war and glory
Might fill my mind, and take up all my thoughts;
And that my shatter'd soul, impair'd with grief,
Once more would re-assume its wonted vigour,
And ev'ry idle passion quit my breast.
Pyl. The thought was worthy Agamemnon's son.
Ores. But see the strange perverseness of my stars,
Which throws me on the rock I strove to shun!
The jealous chiefs, and all the states of Greece,
With one united voice complain of Pyrrhus;
That now, forgetful of the promise giv'n,
And mindless of his godlike father's fate,
Astyanax he nurses in his court;
Astyanax, the young, surviving hope

Of ruin'd Troy; Astyanax, descended
From a long race of kings—great Hector's son.
Pyl. A name still dreadful in the ears of Greece!
But, prince, you'll cease to wonder, why the child
Lives thus protected in the court of Pyrrhus,
When you shall hear, the bright Andromache,
His lovely captive, charms him from his purpose:
The mother's beauty guards the helpless son.
Ores. Your tale confirms what I have heard; and hence
Spring all my hopes. Since my proud rival wooes
Another partner to his throne and bed,
Hermione may still be mine. Her father,
The injur'd Menelaus, thinks already
His daughter slighted, and th' intended nuptials
Too long delay'd. I heard his loud complaints
With secret pleasure; and was glad to find
Th' ungrateful maid neglected in her turn,
And all my wrongs aveng'd in her disgrace.
Pyl. Oh, may you keep your just resentments warm!
Ores. Resentments! Oh, my friend, too soon I found
They grew not out of hatred. I am betray'd:
I practise on myself, and fondly plot
My own undoing. Goaded on by love,
I canvass'd all the suffrages of Greece;
And here I come, their sworn ambassador,
To speak their jealousies, and claim this boy.
Pyl. Pyrrhus will treat your embassy with scorn.
Full of Achilles, his redoubted sire;
Pyrrhus is proud, impetuous, headstrong, fierce;
Made up of passions: will he then be sway'd,
And give to death the son of her he loves?
Ores. Oh, would he render up Hermione,
And keep Astyanax, I should be bless'd!
He must; he shall: Hermione is my life,
My soul, my rapture!—I'll no longer curb
The strong desire, that hurries me to madness;

I'll give a loose to love; I'll bear her hence;
I'll tear her from his arms; I'll—O, ye gods!
Give me Hermione, or let me die!—
But, tell me, Pylades, how stand my hopes?
Is Pyrrhus still enamour'd with her charms?
Or dost thou think he'll yield me up the prize,
The dear, dear prize, which he has ravish'd from me?

Pyl. I dare not flatter your fond hopes so far:
The king, indeed, cold to the Spartan princess,
Turns all his passion to Andromache,
Hector's afflicted widow. But in vain,
With interwoven love and rage, he sues
The charming captive, obstinately cruel.
Oft he alarms her for her child, confin'd
Apart; and, when her tears begin to flow,
As soon he stops them, and recalls his threats.
Hermione a thousand times has seen
His ill-requited vows return to her,
And takes his indignation all for love.
What can be gather'd from a man so various?
He may, in the disorder of his soul,
Wed her he hates, and punish her he loves.

Ores. But tell me, how the wrong'd Hermione
Brooks her slow nuptials, and dishonour'd charms?

Pyl. Hermione would fain be thought to scorn
Her wavering lover, and disdain his falsehood;
But, spite of all her pride and conscious beauty,
She mourns in secret her neglected charms,
And oft has made me privy to her tears;
Still threatens to be gone, yet still she stays,
And sometimes sighs, and wishes for Orestes.

Ores. Ah, were those wishes from her heart, my friend,
I'd fly in transport—— [*Flourish within.*

Pyl. Hear!—The king approaches
To give you audience. Speak your embassy
Without reserve: urge the demands of Greece;
And, in the name of all her kings, require

That Hector's son be given into your hands.
Pyrrhus, instead of granting what they ask,
To speed his love, and win the Trojan dame,
Will make it merit to preserve her son.
But, see: he comes!

Ores. Meanwhile, my Pylades,
Go, and dispose Hermione to see
Her lover, who is come thus far, to throw
Himself, in all his sorrows, at her feet.

[*Exit* PYLADES.

Enter PYRRHUS, PHŒNIX, *and* ATTENDANTS.

Before I speak the message of the Greeks,
Permit me, sir, to glory in the title
Of their ambassador; since I behold
Troy's vanquisher, and great Achilles' son,
Nor does the son rise short of such a father:
If Hector fell by him, Troy fell by you.
But what your father never would have done,
You do. You cherish the remains of Troy;
And, by an ill-tim'd pity, keep alive
The dying embers of a ten years' war.
Have you so soon forgot the mighty Hector?
The Greeks remember his high brandish'd sword,
That fill'd their state with widows and with orphans;
For which they call for vengeance on his son.
Who knows what he may one day prove? Who knows,
But he may brave us in our ports, and, fill'd
With Hector's fury, set our fleets on blaze?
You may, yourself, live to repent your mercy.
Comply, then, with the Grecians' just demands;
Satiate their vengeance, and preserve yourself.

Pyr. The Greeks are for my safety more concern'd
Than I desire. I thought your kings were met
On more important counsel. When I heard
The name of their ambassador, I hop'd
Some glorious enterprize was taking birth.
Is Agamemnon's son dispatch'd for this?

And do the Grecian chiefs, renown'd in war,
A race of heroes, join in close debate,
To plot an infant's death?—What right has Greece
To ask his life? Must I, must I alone,
Of all her scepter'd warriors, be deny'd
To treat my captive as I please? Know, prince,
When Troy lay smoking on the ground, and each
Proud victor shar'd the harvest of the war,
Andromache, and this, her son, were mine;
Were mine by lot. And who shall wrest them from me?
Ulysses bore away old Priam's queen;
Cassandra was your own great father's prize:
Did I concern myself in what they won?
Did I send embassies to claim their captives?

Ores. But, sir, we fear for you, and for ourselves.
Troy may again revive, and a new Hector
Rise in Astyanax. Then think betimes——

Pyr. Let dastard souls be timorously wise:
But tell them, Pyrrhus knows not how to form
Far fancy'd ills, and dangers out of sight.

Ores. Sir, call to mind the unrivalled strength of Troy,
Her walls, her bulwarks, and her gates of brass;
Her kings, her heroes, and embattled armies!

Pyr. I call them all to mind; and see them all
Confus'd in dust; all mix'd in one wide ruin;
All but a child, and he in bondage held.
What vengeance can we fear from such a Troy?
If they have sworn to extinguish Hector's race,
Why was their vow for twelve long months deferr'd?
Why was he not in Priam's bosom slain?
He should have fall'n among the slaughter'd heaps,
Whelm'd under Troy. His death had then been just,
When age and infancy, alike in vain,
Pleaded their weakness; when the heat of conquest,
And horrors of the fight, rouz'd all our rage,

And blindly hurry'd us through scenes of death.
My fury then was without bounds; but now,
My wrath appeas'd, must I be cruel still?
And, deaf to all the tender calls of pity,
Like a cool murderer, bathe my hands in blood?
An infant's blood?—No, prince—Go, bid the Greeks
Mark out some other victim; my revenge
Has had its fill. What has escap'd from Troy,
Shall not be sav'd to perish in Epirus.

Ores. I need not tell you, sir, Astyanax
Was doom'd to death in Troy; nor mention how
The crafty mother sav'd her darling son.
The Greeks do now but urge their former sentence:
Nor is't the boy, but Hector they pursue;
The father draws their vengeance on the son—
The father, who so oft in Grecian blood
Has drench'd his sword—the father, whom the Greeks
May seek e'en here—Prevent them, sir, in time.

Pyr. No! let them come; since I was born to wage
Eternal wars. Let them now turn their arms
On him who conquer'd for them. Let them come,
And in Epirus seek another Troy.
'Twas thus they recompens'd my godlike sire;
Thus was Achilles thank'd. But, prince, remember,
Their black ingratitude then cost them dear.

Ores. Shall Greece, then, find a rebel son in Pyrrhus?

Pyr. Have I, then, conquer'd to depend on Greece?

Ores. Hermione will sway your soul to peace,
And mediate 'twixt her father and yourself.
Her beauty will enforce my embassy.

Pyr. Hermione may have her charms, and I
May love her still, though not her father's slave.
I may, in time, give proofs that I'm a lover,
But never must forget that I'm a king.
Meanwhile, sir, you may see fair Helen's daughter:

I know how near in blood you stand ally'd.
That done, you have my answer, prince. The Greeks,
No doubt, expect your quick return.
[*Exeunt* ORESTES *and* ATTENDANTS.
Phœn. Sir, do you send your rival to the princess?
Pyr. I am told that he has lov'd her long.
Phœn. If so,
Have you not cause to fear, the smother'd flame
May kindle at her sight, and blaze anew;
And she be wrought to listen to his passion?
Pyr. Ay, let them, Phœnix, let them love their fill;
Let them go hence; let them depart together:
Together let them sail for Sparta; all my ports
Are open to them both. From what constraint,
What irksome thoughts should I then be reliev'd!
Phœn. But, sir——
Pyr. I shall, another time, good Phœnix,
Unbosom to thee all my thoughts—For, see,
Andromache appears. [*Exeunt* PHŒNIX *and* GUARDS.

Enter ANDROMACHE *and* CEPHISA.

May I, madam,
Flatter my hopes so far as to believe
You come to seek me here?
Andr. This way, sir, leads
To those apartments, where you guard my son.
Since you permit me once a day, to visit
All I have left, of Hector and of Troy,
I go to weep a few sad moments with him.
I have not yet, to-day, embrac'd my child;
I have not held him in my widow'd arms.
Pyr. Ah, madam! should the threats of Greece prevail,
You'll have occasion for your tears, indeed!
Andr. Alas! what threats? What can alarm the Greeks?
There are no Trojans left.
Pyr. *Their hate* to Hector

Can never die: the terror of his name
Still shakes their souls, and makes them dread his son.
Andr. A mighty honour for victorious Greece,
To fear an infant, a poor, friendless child!
Who smiles in bondage, nor yet knows himself
The son of Hector, and the slave of Pyrrhus.
Pyr. Weak as he is, the Greeks demand his life,
And send no less than Agamemnon's son
To fetch him hence.
Andr. And, sir, do you comply
With such demands?—This blow is aim'd at me.
How should the child avenge his slaughter'd sire?
But, cruel men! they will not have him live
To cheer my heavy heart, and ease my bonds.
I promis'd to myself, in him, a son,
In him, a friend, a husband, and a father.
But I must suffer sorrow heap'd on sorrow,
And still the fatal stroke must come from you.
Pyr. Dry up those tears; I must not see you weep;
And know, I have rejected their demands.
The Greeks already threaten me with war;
But, should they arm, as once they did, for Helen,
And hide the Adriatic with their fleets;
Should they prepare a second ten years' siege,
And lay my towers and palaces in dust;
I am determin'd to defend your son,
And rather die myself, than give him up.
But, madam, in the midst of all these dangers,
Will you refuse me a propitious smile?
Hated of Greece, and press'd on every side,
Let me not, madam, while I fight your cause,
Let me not combat with your cruelties,
And count Andromache amongst my foes.
Andr. Consider, sir, how this will sound in Greece!
How can so great a soul betray such weakness?
Let not men say, so generous a design
Was but the transport of a heart in love.
Pyr. Your charms will justify me to the world.

Andr. How can Andromache, a captive queen,
O'erwhelm'd with grief, a burden to herself,
Harbour a thought of love? Alas! what charms
Have these unhappy eyes, by you condemn'd
To weep for ever?—Talk of it no more.——
To reverence the misfortunes of a foe;
To succour the distress'd; to give the son
To an afflicted mother; to repel
Confederate nations, leagu'd against his life;
Unbrib'd by love, unterrify'd by threats,
To pity, to protect him: these are cares,
These are exploits, worthy Achilles' son.

Pyr. Will your resentments, then, endure for ever?
Must Pyrrhus never be forgiven?—'Tis true,
My sword has often reek'd in Phrygian blood,
And carry'd havoc through your royal kindred;
But you, fair princess, amply have aveng'd
Old Priam's vanquish'd house; and all the woes
I brought on them, fall short of what I suffer.
We both have suffer'd in our turns, and now
Our common foes shall teach us to unite.

Andr. Where does the captive not behold a foe?

Pyr. Forget the term of hatred, and behold
A friend in Pyrrhus. Give me but to hope,
I'll free your son—I'll be a father to him;
Myself will teach him to avenge the Trojans.
I'll go in person to chastise the Greeks,
Both for your wrongs and mine. Inspir'd by you,
What would I not atchieve? Again shall Troy
Rise from its ashes: this right arm shall fix
Her seat of empire, and your son shall reign.

Andr. Such dreams of greatness suit not my condition:
His hopes of empire perish'd with his father.
No: thou imperial city, ancient Troy,
Thou pride of Asia, founded by the gods!
Never, oh, never, must we hope to see
Those bulwarks rise, which Hector could not guard!

Sir, all I wish for is some quiet exile,
Where far from Greece remov'd,
I may conceal my son, and mourn my husband.
Your love creates me envy. Oh, return,
Return to your betroth'd Hermione!
Pyr. Why do you mock me thus? you know, I cannot,
You know my heart is yours—my soul hangs on you;
You take up every wish: my waking thoughts,
And nightly dreams, are all employ'd on you.
'Tis true, Hermione was sent to share
My throne and bed; and would, with transport, hear
The vows which you neglect.
Andr. She has no Troy,
No Hector to lament: she has not lost
A husband by your conquests. Such a husband,
(Tormenting thought!) whose death alone, has made
Your sire immórtal! Pyrrhus and Achilles,
Are both grown great by my calamities.
Pyr. Madam, 'tis well!—'Tis very well! I find
Your will must be obey'd; imperious captive,
It shall. Henceforth, I blot you from my mind;
You teach me to forget your charms;—to hate you:
For know, inhuman beauty, I have lov'd
Too well to treat you with indifference.
Think well upon it; my disorder'd soul
Wavers between th' extreme of love and rage;
I have been too tame; I will awake to vengeance!
The son shall answer for the mother's scorn.
The Greeks demand him, nor will I endanger
My realms, to pleasure an ungrateful woman.
Andr. Then he must die!
He has no succour left, beside
His mother's tears, and his own innocence.
Pyr. Go, madam, visit this unhappy son;
The sight of him may bend your stubborn heart,
And turn to softness your unjust disdain.
I shall once more expect your answer. Go:

And think, while you embrace the captive boy,
Think, that his life depends on your resolves.
[*Exeunt* PYRRHUS *and his* ATTENDANTS.
Andr. I'll go; and in the anguish of my heart,
Weep o'er my child—If he must die, my life
Is wrapp'd in his; I shall not long survive.
'Tis for his sake that I have suffer'd life,
Groan'd in captivity, and outliv'd Hector.
Yes, my Astyanax, we'll go together!
Together, to the realms of night, we'll go!
There to thy ravish'd eyes, thy sire I'll show,
And point him out, among the shades below. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Palace.

Enter HERMIONE *and* CLEONE.

Her. Well, I'll be rul'd, Cleone—I will see him;
I have told Pylades that he may bring him;
But, trust me, were I left to my own thoughts,
I should forbid him yet.
Cleo. And why forbid him?
Is he not, madam, still the same Orestes?
Orestes, whose return you oft have wish'd?
The man, whose sufferings you so late lamented,
And often prais'd his constancy and love?

Her. That love, that constancy, so ill requited,
Upbraids me to myself. I blush, to think
How I have us'd him, and would shun his presence.
What will be my confusion, when he sees me
Neglected and forsaken, like himself!
Will he not say, is this the scornful maid,
The proud Hermione, that tyranniz'd
In Sparta's court, and triumph'd in her charms?
Her insolence at last is well repaid.
I cannot bear the thought!

Cleo. You wrong yourself
With unbecoming fears. He knows too well,
Your beauty, and your worth. Your lover comes not
To offer insults, but repeat his vows,
And breathe his ardent passion at your feet.
But, madam, what's your royal father's will?
What orders do your letters bring from Sparta?

Her. His orders are, if Pyrrhus still delay
The nuptials, and refuse to sacrifice
This Trojan boy, I should with speed embark,
And, with their embassy, return to Greece.

Cleo. What would you more? Orestes comes in time
To save your honour. Pyrrhus cools apace:
Prevent his falsehood, and forsake him first.
I know you hate him, you have told me so.

Her. Hate him! My injur'd honour bids me hate him.
The ungrateful man! the man, I lov'd so dearly!
The man, I doted on! Oh, my Cleone!
How is it possible I should not hate him?

Cleo. Then give him over, madam: Quit his court,
And, with Orestes——

Her. No; I must have time
To work up all my rage!—To meditate
A parting, full of horror! My revenge
Will be but too much quicken'd by the traitor.

Cleo. Do you then wait new insults, new affronts?
To draw you from your father! Then to leave you!
In his own court, to leave you, for a captive!
If Pyrrhus can provoke you, he has done it.
Her. Why dost thou heighten my distress? I fear
To search out my own thoughts, and sound my heart.
Be blind to what thou see'st; Believe me cur'd;
Flatter my weakness; tell me I have conquer'd;
Think, that my injur'd soul is set against him;
And do thy best, to make me think so too.
Cleo. Why would you loiter here then?
Her. Let us fly!
Let us begone! I leave him to his captive;
Let him go kneel, and supplicate his slave.
Let us begone!—But what, if he repent?
What, if the perjur'd prince again submit,
And sue for pardon? What, if he renew
His former vows?—But, oh, the faithless man!
He slights me—drives me to extremities!—However,
I'll stay, Cleone, to perplex their loves;
I'll stay, till, by an open breach of contract,
I make him hateful to the Greeks. Already
Their vengeance have I drawn upon the son;
The second embassy shall claim the mother:
I will redouble all my griefs upon her.
Cleo. Ah, madam! whither does your rage transport you?
Andromache, alas, is innocent!
A woman, plung'd in sorrow—dead to love;
And, when she thinks of Pyrrhus, 'tis with horror.
Her. 'Would I had done so too! But, alas!
I made no secret of my passion to him,
Nor thought it dangerous to be sincere.
My eyes, my tongue, my actions, spoke my heart.
Cleo. Well might you speak without reserve, to one
Engag'd to you by solemn oaths and treaties.
Her. His ardour, too, was an excuse to mine:

With other eyes, he saw me then.—Cleone,
Thou may'st remember, every thing conspir'd
To favour him: my father's wrongs aveng'd;
The Greeks triumphant; fleets of Trojan spoils;
His mighty sire's, his own immortal fame;
His eager love—all, all conspir'd against me!
But I have done—I'll think no more of Pyrrhus.
Orestes wants not merit, and he loves me.
My gratitude, my honour, both plead for him;
And, if I've power o'er my heart, 'tis his.

Cleo. Madam, he comes.

Her. Alas, I did not think
He was so near! I wish I might not see him.

Enter ORESTES.

How am I to interpret, sir, this visit?
Is it a compliment of form, or love?

Ores. Madam, you know my weakness. 'Tis my fate
To love, unpity'd; to desire to see you;
And still to swear each time may be the last.
My passion breaks through my repeated oaths,
And every time I visit you, I'm perjur'd.
Even now, I find my wounds all bleed afresh;
I blush to own it, but I know no cure,
I call the gods to witness, I have try'd
Whatever man could do, but try'd in vain,
To wear you from my mind. Through stormy seas,
And savage climes, in a whole year of absence,
I courted dangers, and I long'd for death.

Her. Why will you, thus, indulge the mournful tale?
It ill becomes the ambassador of Greece,
To talk of dying, and of love. Remember
The kings you represent: shall their revenge
Be disappointed by your ill-tim'd passion?

Discharge your embassy—'tis not Orestes
The Greeks desire should die.
Ores. My embassy
Is at an end: for Pyrrhus has refus'd
To give up Hector's son. Some hidden power
Protects the boy.
Her. Faithless, ungrateful man! [*Aside.*
Ores. I now prepare for Greece; but, ere I go,
Would hear my final doom pronounc'd by you—
What do I say?—I do already hear it;
My doom is fix'd—I read it in your eyes.
Her. Will you then still despair?—be still suspicious?
What have I done?—wherein have I been cruel?
'Tis true, you find me in the court of Pyrrhus;
But 'twas my royal father sent me hither.
And who can tell, but I have shar'd your griefs?
Have I ne'er wept in secret?—never wish'd
To see Orestes?
Ores. Wish'd to see Orestes?
O joy! O ecstacy! My soul's intranc'd!
O charming princess! O transcendant maid!
My utmost wish!—Thus, thus let me express
My boundless thanks! I never was unhappy——
Am I Orestes?
Her. You are Orestes;
The same unalter'd, generous, faithful lover;
The prince, whom I esteem, whom I lament,
And whom I fain would teach my heart to love.
Ores. Ay, there it is! I have but your esteem,
While Pyrrhus has your heart.
Her. Believe me, prince,
Were you as Pyrrhus, I should hate you!
Ores. No!
I should be bless'd—I should be lov'd, as he is!
Yet, all this while, I die by your disdain,
While he neglects your charms, and courts another.

Her. And who has told you, prince, that I'm neglected?
Has Pyrrhus said—Oh, I shall go distracted!
Has Pyrrhus told you so? or is it you
Who think thus meanly of me?—Sir, perhaps,
All do not judge like you.
Ores. Madam, go on—
Insult me still; I'm us'd to bear your scorn.
Her. Why am I told how Pyrrhus loves or hates?
Go, go, and arm the Greeks against the rebel;
Let them lay waste his country, raze his towns,
Destroy his fleets, his palaces—himself!
Go, go, and tell me then how much I love him!
Ores. To hasten his destruction, come yourself;
And work your royal father to his ruin.
Her. Meanwhile, he weds Andromache!
Ores. Ah, princess!
What is't I hear?
Her. What infamy for Greece,
If he should wed a Phrygian, and a captive?
Ores. Is this your hatred, madam?—'Tis in vain
To hide your passion—every thing betrays it;
Your looks, your speech, your anger,—nay, your silence;
Your love appears in all; your secret flame
Breaks out the more, the more you would conceal it.
Her. Your jealousy perverts my meaning still,
And wrests each circumstance to your disquiet;
My very hate is construed into fondness.
Ores. Impute my fears, if groundless, to my love.
Her. Then hear me, sir—Obedience to a father
First brought me hither; and the same obedience
Detains me here, till Pyrrhus drive me hence,
Or my offended father shall recall me.
Tell this proud king, that Menalaus scorns
To match his daughter with a foe of Greece:
Bid him resign Astyanax, or me.

If he persists to guard the hostile boy,
Hermione embarks with you for Sparta. [*Exit.*
Ores. Then is Orestes bless'd! My griefs are fled!
Fled, like a dream!—unlook'd-for joy!
Never let love despair;—The prize is mine!
Be smooth, ye seas, and ye propitious winds,
Breathe from Epirus to the Spartan coasts!
I long to see the sails unfurl'd—But see!
Pyrrhus approaches in a happy hour!

Enter PYRRHUS *and* PHŒNIX.

Pyr. I was in pain to find you, prince. My warm
Ungovern'd temper, would not let me weigh
The importance of your embassy, and hear
You argue for my good.—I was to blame.
I since have pois'd your reasons, and I thank
My good allies;—their care deserves my thanks.
You have convinc'd me, that the weal of Greece,
My father's honour, and my own repose,
Demand, that Hector's race should be destroy'd.
I shall deliver up Astyanax,
And you yourself shall bear the victim hence.
Ores. If you approve it, sir, and are content
To spill the blood of a defenceless child,
The offended Greeks, no doubt, will be appeas'd.
Pyr. Closer to strain the knot of our alliance,
I have determin'd to espouse Hermione.
You come in time to grace our nuptial rites:
In you, the kings of Greece will all be present,
And you have right to personate her father,
As his ambassador, and brother's son.
Go, prince, renew your visit; tell Hermione,
To-morrow, I receive her from your hands.
Ores. [*Aside.*] Oh, change of fortune! Oh, undone
Orestes! [*Exit.*
Pyr. Well, Phœnix! Am I still a slave to love?
What think'st thou now? Am I myself again?
Phœn. 'Tis as it should be; this discovers Pyrrhus;

Shows all the hero: now you are yourself—
The son, the rival of the great Achilles!
Greece will applaud you, and the world confess,
Pyrrhus has conquer'd Troy a second time!
Pyr. Nay, Phœnix, now I but begin to triumph;
I never was a conqueror till now;
Believe me, a whole host, a war of foes,
May sooner be subdu'd, than love. Oh, Phœnix!
What ruin have I shunn'd! The Greeks, enrag'd,
Hung o'er me like a gathering storm, and soon
Had burst in thunder on my head: while I
Abandon'd duty, empire, honour, all,
To please a thankless woman!—One kind look
Had quite undone me!
Phœn. Oh, my royal master!
The gods, in favour to you, made her cruel.
Pyr. Thou saw'st, with how much scorn she treated me!
When I permitted her to see her son,
I hop'd it might have work'd her to my wishes.
I went to see the mournful interview,
And found her bath'd in tears, and lost in passion;
Wild with distress, a thousand times, she call'd
On Hector's name: and, when I spoke in comfort,
And promis'd my protection to her son,
She kiss'd the boy, and call'd again on Hector:
Does she then, think, that I preserve the boy,
To sooth, and keep alive, her flame for Hector?
Phœn. No doubt, she does, and thinks you favour'd in it;
But let her go, for an ungrateful woman!
Pyr. I know the thoughts of her proud, stubborn heart;
Vain of her charms, and insolent in beauty,
She mocks my rage; and when it threatens loudest,
Expects 'twill soon be humbled into love.
But we shall change our parts, and she shall find
I can be deaf like her, and steel my heart.

She is Hector's widow; I, Achilles' son!
Pyrrhus is born to hate Andromache.
Phœn. My royal master, talk of her no more;
I do not like this anger. Your Hermione
Should now engross your thoughts. 'Tis time to see her;
'Tis time you should prepare the nuptial rites,
And not rely upon a rival's care;
It may be dangerous.
Pyr. But, tell me, Phœnix,
Dost thou not think, the proud Andromache
Will be enrag'd, when I shall wed the princess?
Phœn. Why does Andromache still haunt your thoughts?
What is't to you, be she enrag'd, or pleas'd?
Let her name perish—think of her no more.
Pyr. No, Phœnix;—I have been too gentle with her,
I have check'd my wrath, and stifled my resentment:
She knows not yet, to what degree I hate her.
Let us return—I'll brave her to her face:
I'll give my anger its free course against her.
Thou shalt see, Phœnix, how I'll break her pride!
Phœn. Oh, go not, sir!—There's ruin in her eyes!
You do not know your strength; you'll fall before her,
Adore her beauty, and revive her scorn.
Pyr. That were, indeed, a most unmanly weakness!
Thou dost not know me, Phœnix.
Phœn. Ah, my prince!
You are still struggling in the toils of love.
Pyr. Canst thou then think, I love this woman still?
One, who repays my passion with disdain!
A stranger, captive, friendless and forlorn;
She and her darling son within my power;
Her life a forfeit to the Greeks: yet I
Preserve her son—would take her to my throne;

Would fight her battles, and avenge her wrongs;
And all this while she treats me as her foe!

Phœn. You have it in your power to be reveng'd.

Pyr. Yes—and I'll show my power! I'll give her cause
To hate me! her Astyanax shall die—
What tears will then be shed! How will she then,
In bitterness of heart, reproach my name!
Then, to complete her woes, will I espouse
Hermione—'Twill stab her to the heart!

Phœn. Alas, you threaten like a lover still!

Pyr. Phœnix, excuse this struggle of my soul;
'Tis the last effort of expiring love.

Phœn. Then hasten, sir, to see the Spartan princess,
And turn the bent of your desires on her.

Pyr. Oh, 'tis a heavy task to conquer love,
And wean the soul from her accustom'd fondness!
But, come—A long farewell to Hector's widow!
'Tis with a secret pleasure I look back,
And see the many dangers I have pass'd.
The merchant, thus, in dreadful tempests toss'd,
Thrown by the waves on some unlook'd-for coast,
Oft turns, and sees, with a delighted eye,
Midst rocks and shelves, the broken billows fly;
And, while the outrageous winds the deep deform,
Smiles on the tumult, and enjoys the storm. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

Another Apartment in the Palace.

Enter PYLADES *and* ORESTES.

Pyl. For Heaven's sake, sir, compose your ruffled mind,
And moderate your rage.
Ores. No, Pylades!
This is no time for counsel.—I am deaf.
Talk not of reason! I have been too patient.
Life is not worth my care.—My soul grows desperate.
I'll bear her off, or perish in the attempt.
I'll force her from his arms.—By Heaven, I will!
Pyl. Well, 'tis agreed, my friend—We'll force her hence,
But still consider—we are in Epirus.
The court, the guards, Hermione herself,
The very air we breathe, belongs to Pyrrhus.
Good gods! what tempted you to seek her here?
Ores. Lost to myself, I knew not what I did—
My purposes were wild. Perhaps, I came
To menace Pyrrhus, and upbraid the woman.
Pyl. This violence of temper may prove fatal.
Ores. I must be more than man, to bear these shocks,
These outrages of fate, with temper.
He tells me that he weds Hermione,
And will, to-morrow, take her from my hand!
My hand shall sooner tear the tyrant's heart

Pyl. Your passion blinds you, sir; he's not to blame.
Could you but look into the soul of Pyrrhus,
Perhaps you'll find it tortur'd, like your own.
Take my advice—Think not to force her hence;
But fly yourself from her destructive charms.
Her soul is link'd to Pyrrhus.

Ores. Talk no more!
I cannot bear the thought! She must be mine!
Did Pyrrhus carry thunder in his hand,
I'd stand the bolt, and challenge all his fury,
Ere I resign Hermione—By force
I'll snatch her hence, and bear her to my ships!
Have we forgot her mother, Helen's rape?

Pyl. Will, then, Orestes turn a ravisher,
And blot his embassy?

Ores. Oh, Pylades!
My grief weighs heavy on me—'twill distract me!
Oh, leave me to myself!—
Mine be the danger, mine the enterprize.
All I request of thee, is to return,
And, in my place, convey Astyanax
(As Pyrrhus has consented) into Greece.
Go, Pylades.

Pyl. Lead on, my friend, lead on!
Let us bear off Hermione! No toil,
No danger, can deter a friend——Lead on!
This very night we'll carry her on board.

Ores. Thou art too good—I trespass on thy friendship:
But, oh! excuse a wretch, whom no man pities,
Except thyself; one, just about to lose
The treasure of his soul! whom all mankind
Conspire to hate, and one, who hates himself.
When will my friendship be of use to thee?

Pyl. The question is unkind.—But now, remember
To keep your counsels close, and hide your thoughts;
Let not Hermione suspect——no more——
I see her coming, sir.

Ores. Away, my friend;
I am advis'd; my all depends upon it.
[*Exit* PYLADES.

Enter HERMIONE *and* CLEONE.

Ores. Madam, your orders are obey'd; I have seen
Pyrrhus, my rival; and have gain'd him for you.
The king resolves to wed you.
Her. So I am told;
And, farther, I am inform'd, that you, Orestes,
Are to dispose me for the intended marriage.
Ores. And are you, madam, willing to comply?
Her. What can I do, alas! my faith is promis'd:
Can I refuse what is not mine to give?
A princess is not at her choice to love;
All we have left us is a blind obedience:
And yet you see how far I had comply'd,
And made my duty yield to your entreaties.
Ores. Ah, cruel maid! you knew—but I have done.
All have a right to please themselves in love.
I blame you not. 'Tis true, I hop'd—but you
Are mistress of your heart, and I'm content.
'Tis fortune is my enemy, not you.
But, madam, I shall spare you farther pain
On this uneasy theme, and take my leave. [*Exit.*
Her. Cleone, couldst thou think he'd be so calm?
Cleo. Madam, his silent grief sits heavy on him.
He is to be pitied. His too eager love
Has made him busy to his own destruction.
His threats have wrought this change of mind in Pyrrhus.
Her. Dost thou think Pyrrhus capable of fear?
Whom should the intrepid Pyrrhus fear? The Greeks?
Did he not lead their harrass'd troops to conquest,
When they despair'd, when they retir'd from Troy,
And sought for shelter in their burning fleets?
No, Oh, Cleone, he is above constraint;
He acts unforc'd; and where he weds, he loves.

Cleo. Oh, that Orestes had remain'd in Greece!
I fear to-morrow will prove fatal to him.
Her. Wilt thou discourse of nothing but Orestes?
Pyrrhus is mine again!——Is mine for ever!
The bold, the brave, the godlike Pyrrhus!
Oh, my Cleone, I am wild with joy!
Cleo. Madam, conceal your joy—I see Andromache.
She weeps, and comes to speak her sorrows to you.
Her. I would indulge the gladness of my heart!
Let us retire—Her grief is out of season.

Enter ANDROMACHE *and* CEPHISA.

Andr. Ah, madam! whither, whither do you fly?
Where can your eyes behold a sight more pleasing
Than Hector's widow, suppliant and in tears?
I come not an alarm'd, a jealous foe,
To envy you the heart your charms have won—
The only man I sought to please, is gone;
Kill'd in my sight, by an inhuman hand.
But, oh, I have a son!—And you, one day,
Will be no stranger to a mother's fondness:
But Heaven forbid that you should ever know
A mother's sorrow for an only son.
Her joy, her bliss, her last surviving comfort!
When every hour she trembles for his life!
Your power o'er Pyrrhus may relieve my fears.
Alas, what danger is there in a child,
Sav'd from the wreck of a whole ruin'd empire?
Let me go hide him in some desert isle:
You may rely upon my tender care
To keep him far from perils of ambition:
All he can learn of me will be to weep!
Her. Madam, 'tis easy to conceive your grief:
But, it would ill become me to solicit
In contradiction to my father's will:
If Pyrrhus, madam, must be wrought to pity,
No woman does it better than yourself.

If you gain him, I shall comply, of course.
[*Exeunt* HERMIONE *and* CLEONE.

Andr. Didst thou not mind with what disdain she spoke?
Youth and prosperity have made her vain;
She has not seen the fickle turns of life.

Ceph. Madam, were I as you, I'd take her counsel;
I'd speak my own distress: one look from you
Will vanquish Pyrrhus, and confound the Greeks—
See, where he comes——Lay hold on this occasion.

Enter PYRRHUS *and* PHŒNIX.

Pyr. Where is the princess?—Did you not inform me,
Hermione was here? [*To* PHŒNIX.

Phœn. I thought so, sir.

Andr. Thou see'st what mighty power my eyes have on him! [*To* CEPHISA.

Pyr. What says she, Phœnix?

Andr. I have no hope left!

Phœn. Let us begone—Hermione expects you.

Ceph. What do you, madam? break this sullen silence.

Andr. My child's already promis'd!—

Ceph. But not given.

Andr. No! no!——my tears are vain!—His doom is fix'd!

Pyr. See, if she deigns to cast one look upon us!
Proud woman!

Andr. I provoke him by my presence.
Let us retire.

Pyr. Come, let us satisfy
The Greeks, and give them up this Phrygian boy.

Andr. Ah, sir, recall those words—What have you said!
If you give up my son, oh, give up me!—
You, who so many times have sworn me friendship:
Oh, Heavens! will you not look with pity on me?

Is there no hope? Is there no room for pardon?

Pyr. Phœnix will answer you—My word is past.

Andr. You, who would brave so many dangers for me—

Pyr. I was your lover then—I now am free.
To favour you, I might have spar'd his life;
But you would never vouchsafe to ask it of me.
Now 'tis too late.

Andr. Oh, sir, excuse
The pride of royal blood, that checks my soul,
And knows not how to be importunate.
You know, alas! I was not born to kneel,
To sue for pity, and to own a master.

Pyr. No, in your heart you curse me! you disdain
My generous flame, and scorn to be oblig'd!
But I shall leave you to your great resentments.
Let us go, Phœnix, and appease the Greeks.

Ceph. Oh, madam——

Andr. What can I do more? The tyrant
Sees my distraction, and insults my tears.
[*To* CEPHISA.
—Behold, how low you have reduc'd a queen!
These eyes have seen my country laid in ashes,
My kindred fall in war, my father slain,
My husband dragg'd in his own blood, my son
Condemn'd to bondage, and myself a slave;
Yet, in the midst of these unheard-of woes,
'Twas some relief to find myself your captive;
And that my son, deriv'd from ancient kings,
Since he must serve, had Pyrrhus for his master.
When Priam kneel'd, the great Achilles wept:
I hop'd I should not find his son less noble:
I thought the brave were still the more compassionate.
Oh, do not, sir, divide me from my child!—
If he must die——

Pyr. Phœnix, withdraw a while. [*Exit* PHŒNIX.
Rise, madam—Yet you may preserve your son.

I find, whenever I provoke your tears,
I furnish you with arms against myself.
I thought my hatred fix'd before I saw you.
Oh, turn your eyes upon me, while I speak!
And see if you discover in my looks
An angry judge, or an obdurate foe.
Why will you force me to desert your cause?
In your son's name, I beg we may be friends.
Let me entreat you to secure his life!
Must I turn suppliant for him?
Think, oh think,
'Tis the last time—you both may yet be happy!
I know the ties I break, the foes I arm;
I wrong Hermione; I send her hence,
And with her diadem I bind your brows.
Consider well, for 'tis of moment to you!
Chuse to be wretched, madam, or a queen.
I leave you to your thoughts. When I return,
We'll to the temple—There you'll find your son;
And there be crown'd, or give him up for ever. [*Exit.*

Ceph. I told you, madam, that in spite of Greece,
You would o'er-rule the malice of your fortune.

Andr. Alas, Cephisa, what have I obtain'd!
Only a poor short respite for my son!

Ceph. You have enough approv'd your faith to Hector;
To be reluctant still would be a crime.

Andr. How!—wouldst thou give me Pyrrhus for a husband?

Ceph. Think you 'twill please the ghost of your dead husband,
That you should sacrifice his son? Consider,
Pyrrhus once more invites you to a throne;
Turns all his power against the foes of Troy;
Remembers not Achilles was his father;
Retracts his conquest, and forgets his hatred.

Andr. But how can I forget it!—how can I
Forget my Hector, treated with dishonour;

Depriv'd of funeral rites, and vilely dragg'd,
A bloody corpse, about the walls of Troy!
Can I forget the good old king, his father,
Slain in my presence—at the altar slain!
Which vainly, for protection, he embrac'd.
Hast thou forgot that dreadful night, Cephisa,
When a whole people fell! Methinks, I see
Pyrrhus enrag'd, and, breathing vengeance, enter
Amidst the glare of burning palaces:
I see him hew his passage through my brothers,
And, bath'd in blood, lay all my kindred waste!
Think, in this scene of horror, what I suffer'd!
This is the courtship I receiv'd from Pyrrhus;
And this the husband thou wouldst give me!—No,
We both will perish first! I'll ne'er consent.
Ceph. Since you resolve Astyanax shall die,
Haste to the temple, bid your son farewell.
Andr. O Cephisa!
Thou hast awaken'd all the mother in me.
How can I bid farewell to the dear child,
The pledge, the image, of my much-lov'd lord!
But, Oh! while I deliberate, he dies!
No, no, thou must not die, while I can save thee:
Oh, let me find out Pyrrhus!—Oh, Cephisa!
Do you go find him.
Ceph. What must I say to him?
Andr. Tell him, I love my son to such excess—
But, dost thou think, he means the child shall die?
Ceph. Madam, he'll soon be here—resolve on something.
Andr. Well then, assure him——
Ceph. Madam, of your love?
Andr. Alas, thou know'st that is not in my power!
Oh, my dead lord! Oh, Priam's royal house!
Oh, my Astyanax! at what a price
Thy mother buys thee!—Let us go.
Ceph. But whither?
And what does your unsettled heart resolve?

Andr. Come, my Cephisa, let us go together
To the sad monument, which I have rais'd
To Hector's shade; where, in their sacred urn,
The ashes of my hero lie enclos'd.
There let me weep, there summon to my aid,
With pious rite, my Hector's awful shade;
Let him be witness to my doubts, my fears;
My agonizing heart, my flowing tears:
Oh, may he rise, in pity, from his tomb!
And fix his wretched son's uncertain doom. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The Palace.

Enter HERMIONE *and* CLEONE.

Cleo. This unexpected silence, this reserve,
This outward calm, this unsettled frame of mind,
After such wrongs and insults, much surprise me!
You, who before could not command your rage,
When Pyrrhus look'd but kindly on his captive;
How can you bear, unmov'd, that he should wed her,
And seat her on a throne, which you should fill?
'Twere better, madam——
Her. Have you call'd Orestes?

Cleo. Madam, I have—his love is too impatient
Not to obey with speed the welcome summons.
His love-sick heart o'erlooks his unkind usage:
His ardour's still the same.—Madam, he's here!

Enter ORESTES.

Ores. Ah, madam, is it true? does then Orestes
At length attend you by your own commands?
What can I do—
Her. Orestes, do you love me?
Ores. What means that question, princess?—Do I love you?
My oaths, my perjuries, my hopes, my fears,
My farewell, my return—all speak my love.
Her. Avenge my wrongs, and I'll believe them all.
Ores. It shall be done—My soul has catch'd th' alarm;
We'll spirit up the Greeks—I'll lead them on:
Your cause shall animate our fleets and armies.
Let us return—let us not lose a moment,
But urge the fate of this devoted land:
Let us depart.
Her. No, prince, let us stay here!
I will have vengeance here—I will not carry
This load of infamy to Greece, nor trust
The chance of war, to vindicate my wrongs.
Ere I depart, I'll make Epirus mourn.
If you avenge me, let it be this instant;
My rage brooks no delay—haste to the temple,
Haste, prince, and sacrifice him!
Ores. Whom?
Her. Why, Pyrrhus.
Ores. Pyrrhus! Did you say, Pyrrhus?
Her. You demur—
Oh fly! begone! give me not time to think—
Talk not of laws—he tramples on all laws—
Let me not hear him justify'd—away!

Ores. You cannot think I'll justify my rival.
Madam, your love has made him criminal.
You shall have vengeance—I'll have vengeance too:
But let our hatred be profest and open.
Let us alarm all Greece, denounce a war;
Let us attack him in his strength, and hunt him down
By conquest—Should I turn base assassin,
'Twould sully all the kings I represent.

Her. Have not I been dishonour'd; set at nought;
Expos'd to public scorn?—And will you suffer
The tyrant, who dares use me thus, to live?
Know, prince, I hate him more than once I lov'd him.
The gods alone can tell how once I lov'd him;
Yes, the false, perjur'd man, I once did love him;
And, spite of all his crimes and broken vows,
If he should live, I may relapse—who knows
But I to-morrow may forgive his wrongs?

Ores. First let me tear him piece-meal—he shall die.—
But, madam, give me leisure to contrive
The place, the time, the manner of his death:
Yet I'm a stranger in the court of Pyrrhus;
Scarce have I set my foot within Epirus,
When you enjoin me to destroy the prince.
It shall be done this very night.

Her. But now,
This very hour, he weds Andromache!
Begone, Orestes—kill the faithless tyrant;
My love shall recompence the glorious deed.

Ores. Consider, madam——

Her. You but mock my rage!
Think you to merit by your idle sighs,
And not attest your love by one brave action?
Go, with your boasted constancy! and leave
Hermione to execute her own revenge.
I blush to think how my too easy faith
Has twice been baffled in one shameful hour!

Ores. Hear me but speak!—you know I'll die to serve you!

Her. I'll go myself—I'll stab him at the altar;
Then drive the poniard, reeking with his blood,
Through my own heart.
Better to die with him, than live with you!

Ores. That were to make him blest, and me more wretched.
Madam, he dies by me—Have you a foe,
And shall I let him live? My rival too!
Ere yon meridian sun declines, he dies;
And you shall say, that I deserve your love.

Her. Go, prince; strike home! and leave the rest to me;—
Let all your ships stand ready for our flight.

[*Exit* ORESTES.

Cleo. Madam, you'll perish in this bold attempt.

Her. Give me my vengeance, I'm content to perish.
Oh, would Orestes, when he gives the blow,
Tell him he dies my victim!
Haste, my Cleone! Haste, and tell him,
My revenge is lost, if Pyrrhus knows not,
That he dies by me!

Cleo. I shall obey your orders—But I see
The king approach—Who could expect him here?

Her. Fly! O fly! and bid Orestes
Not to proceed a step before I see him.

[*Exit* CLEONE.

Enter PYRRHUS *and* PHŒNIX.

Pyr. Madam, I ought to shun an injur'd princess:
Your distant looks reproach me: and I come
Not to defend, but to avow, my guilt.
Pyrrhus will ne'er approve his own injustice.
Nor form excuses while his heart condemns him.
Discharge your anger on this perjur'd man!

For I abhor my crime! and should be pleas'd
To hear you speak your wrongs aloud: No terms,
No bitterness of wrath, nor keen reproach,
Will equal half the upbraidings of my heart.
Her. I find, sir, you can be sincere: you scorn
To act your crimes, like other men.
A hero should be bold; above all laws;
Be bravely false, and laugh at solemn ties.
To be perfidious, shows a daring mind!
And you have nobly triumph'd o'er a maid!
To court me—to reject me—to return—
Then to forsake me for a Phrygian slave—
To lay proud Troy in ashes—then to raise
The son of Hector, and renounce the Greeks,
Are actions worthy the great soul of Pyrrhus!
Pyr. Madam, go on: give your resentment birth,
And pour forth all your indignation on me.
Her. 'Twould please your queen, should I upbraid
your falsehood:
I should o'erflow with tears, and die with grief,
And furnish out a tale to sooth her pride;
But, sir, I would not overcharge her joys.
If you would charm Andromache, recount
Your bloody battles, your exploits, your slaughters,
Your great achievements in her father's palace.
She needs must love the man, who fought so bravely,
And in her sight slew half her royal kindred!
Pyr. With horror I look back on my past deeds!
I punish'd Helen's wrongs too far; I shed
Too much of blood. But, madam, Helen's daughter
Should not object those ills the mother caus'd.
However, I am pleas'd to find you hate me—
I was too forward to accuse myself—
The man, who ne'er was lov'd, can ne'er be false.
Obedience to a father, brought you hither;
And I stood bound by promise to receive you.
But *our desires* were different ways inclin'd;
And you, I own, were not oblig'd to love me.

Her. Have I not lov'd you, then! perfidious man!
For you I slighted all the Grecian princes;
Forsook my father's house; conceal'd my wrongs,
When most provok'd; would not return to Sparta,
In hopes that time might fix your wavering heart.
I lov'd you when inconstant; and even now,
Inhuman king! that you pronounce my death,
My heart still doubts, if I should love or hate you—
But, Oh! since you resolve to wed another,
Defer your cruel purpose till to-morrow,
That I may not be here to grace her triumph!
This is the last request, I e'er shall make you—
See, if the barbarous prince vouchsafes an answer!
Go, then, to the lov'd Phrygian; hence! begone!
And bear to her those vows, that once were mine:
Go, in defiance to the avenging gods!
Begone! the priest expects you at the altar—
But, tyrant, have a care I come not thither; [*Exit.*

Phœn. Sir, did you mind her threats? your life's in danger:
There is no trifling with a woman's rage.
The Greeks, that swarm about the court, all hate you;
Will treat you as their country's enemy,
And join in her revenge—Besides, Orestes
Still loves her to distraction.—Sir, I beg—

Pyr. How, Phœnix, should I fear a woman's threats?
A nobler passion takes up all my thoughts:
I must prepare to meet Andromache.
Do thou place all my guards about her son:
If he be safe, Pyrrhus is free from fear. [*Exit.*

Phœn. Oh, Pyrrhus! Oh, what pity 'tis, the gods,
Who fill'd thy soul with every kingly virtue,
Should leave thee so expos'd to wild desires,
That hurry thee beyond the bounds of reason!
[*Flourish.*

But see, the queen,

Magnificent in royal pride, appears!
I must obey, and guard her son from danger. [*Exit.*

Enter ANDROMACHE *and* CEPHISA.

Ceph. Madam, once more, you look and move a queen.
Your sorrows are dispers'd, your charms revive,
And every faded beauty blooms anew.
Andr. Yet all is not as I could wish, Cephisa.
Ceph. You see the king is watchful o'er your son;
Decks him with princely robes—with guards surrounds him.
Astyanax begins to reign already.
Andr. Pyrrhus is noble minded; and I fain
Would live to thank him for Astyanax:
'Tis a vain thought.—However, since my child
Has such a friend, I ought not to repine.
Ceph. For Heaven's sake, madam, let me know your griefs!
If you distrust my faith——
Andr. That were to wrong thee.
Know, then, the secret purpose of my soul:
Andromache will not be false to Pyrrhus,
Nor violate her sacred love to Hector.
This hour I'll meet the king; the holy priest
Shall join us, and confirm our mutual vows.
This will secure a father to my child:
That done, I have no farther use for life:
This pointed dagger, this determin'd hand,
Shall save my virtue, and conclude my woes.
Ceph. Oh, never think that I will stay behind you!
Life is not worth my care, when you are gone.
Andr. I must commit into thy faithful hands
All that is dear and precious to my soul;
Live, and supply my absence to my child.

All that remains of Troy; a future progeny
Of heroes, and a distant line of kings,
In him, is all intrusted to thy care.
Ceph. Oh for a spirit, to support my grief!—
Is there ought more, before you go for ever?
Andr. Oh, my Cephisa! my swoln heart is full!
I have a thousand farewells to my son——
But tears break in—Grief interrupts my speech!—
My soul o'erflows in fondness!—Let him know
I dy'd to save him:
Season his mind with early hints of glory;
Make him acquainted with his ancestors;
Trace out their shining story in his thoughts;
Dwell on the exploits of his immortal father;
And, sometimes, let him hear his mother's name.
He must be taught to stifle his resentments,
And sacrifice his vengeance to his safety.
Should he prove headstrong, rash, or unadvis'd,
He then will frustrate all his mother's virtue,
Provoke his fate, and I shall die in vain.
[*Flourish within.*
Hark, how the trumpet, with its sprightly notes,
Proclaims th' appointed hour, and calls us hence!
Hector, I come, once more a queen, to join thee!
Thus, the gay victim, with fresh garlands crown'd,
Pleas'd with the sacred fife's enlivening sound,
Through gazing crowds, in solemn state proceeds;
And, dress'd in fatal pomp, magnificently bleeds.

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

The Palace.

HERMIONE *alone.*

Her. What have I done? Where am I? Where is Pyrrhus?
Ye gods! what mean these horrors?—I'm undone!
My soul is on the rack! I cannot bear it!
Why do I wander, like some guilty ghost?
What brought me to this place? What keeps me here?
The court of Pyrrhus has no room for me!
Do I still doubt, if I should love, or hate him?
Hard hearted man! how unconcern'd he left me!
Did he once sigh? bestow one pitying look?
Once shed a tear? or speak one soft, kind word?
Did he so much as feign one moment's sorrow,
To calm my grief, and mitigate his falsehood?
Why am I still thus anxious for his life?
Why do I start at his impending fate?
Shall he then live? Shall the base traitor live,
To laugh at my distress? No, let him perish!
Be quick, Orestes!—Execute my orders!
Oh, gods—my orders! Oh, preposterous guilt!
Was it for this, I left my father's court?
Have I then cross'd so many realms and seas,
To murder Pyrrhus?

Enter CLEONE.

Oh, Cleone, help me!
What have I done?—Is Pyrrhus yet alive?
What say'st thou?—Answer me—Where is the king?
Cleo. Madam, I saw the cruel prince set forward,
Triumphant in his looks, and full of joy.
Still as he walk'd, his ravish'd eyes were fix'd
On the fair captive; while through shouting crowds
She pass'd along, with a dejected air,
And seem'd to mourn her Hector to the last.
Her. Insulting tyrant! I shall die with rage!——
But say, Cleone, didst thou mark him well?
Was his brow smooth? Say, did there not appear
Some shade of grief—some little cloud of sorrow?
Did he not stop? Did he not once look back?
Didst thou approach him? Was he not confounded?
Did he not——Oh, be quick, and tell me all!
Cleo. Madam, the tumult of his joy admits
No thought but love. Unguarded, he march'd on,
'Midst a promiscuous throng of friends and foes;
His cares all turn upon Astyanax,
Whom he has lodg'd within the citadel,
Defended by the strength of all his guards.
Her. Enough!—He dies!—The traitor!—Where's Orestes?
Cleo. He's in the temple, with his whole retinue.
Her. Is he still resolute? Is he still determin'd?
Cleo. Madam, I fear——
Her. How! Is Orestes false?
Does he betray me too?
Cleo. A thousand doubts
Perplex his soul, and wound him with remorse;
His virtue and his love prevail, by turns.
He told me, Pyrrhus should not fall ignobly—
Pyrrhus, the warlike son of great Achilles!
He dreads the censure of the Grecian states;—
Of all mankind, and fears to stain his honour.

Her. Poor tim'rous wretch!
Am I bright Helen's daughter?
To vindicate her wrongs, all Greece conspir'd;
For her, confederate nations fought, and kings were slain;
Troy was o'erthrown, and a whole empire fell.
My eyes want force to raise a lover's arm
Against a tyrant, that has dar'd to wrong me!
Cleo. Madam, like Helen, trust your cause to Greece.
Her. No! I'll avenge myself—I'll to the temple!
I'll overturn the altar—stab the priest!
I'll hurl destruction, like a whirlwind, round me!
Stand off! hold me not! I am all distraction!
O Pyrrhus! tyrant! traitor! thou shalt bleed!

Enter ORESTES.

Ores. Madam, 'tis done—your orders are obey'd;
The tyrant lies expiring at the altar.
Her. Is Pyrrhus slain?
Ores. Ev'n now, he gasps in death.
Our Greeks, all undistinguish'd in the crowd,
Flock'd to the temple, and dispers'd themselves
On every side the altar; I was there;
Pyrrhus observ'd me with a haughty eye,
And, proud to triumph over Greece, in me,
From his own brows he took the diadem,
And bound it on the temples of his captive.
Receive, said he, my crown; receive my faith;
Mine, and my people's sovereign, reign for ever!—
From this bless'd hour, a father to your son,
I'll scourge his foes—henceforward, he be styl'd
The Trojan king.
His subjects, with loud acclamations, shook
The spacious dome: Our Greeks, enrag'd, cry'd out
Revenge! revenge!—broke through the thronging press,
And rush'd tumultuous, on the unguarded king.

Pyrrhus, awhile, oppos'd their clashing swords,
And dealt his fatal blows on every side
With manly fierceness; till, oppress'd by numbers,
Streaming with blood, all over gash'd with wounds,
He reel'd, he groan'd, and at the altar fell.—
Haste, madam, let us fly! haste to our ships!
They lie unmoor'd—Our friends attend us there.

Her. What have they done!

Ores. Madam, forgive their rage.
I own your vengeance had been more complete,
Had Pyrrhus fall'n by me; and had he known,
Hermione chastis'd him by my arm.

Her. Peace, monster, peace!—Go, tell thy horrid tale
To savages, and houl it out in deserts!
Oh, fell barbarian!
What had he done? What could provoke thy madness,
To assassinate so great, so brave a man?
Who set thee on?

Ores. Oh, grant me patience, Heaven!
With your own lips did you not curse the tyrant,
Pronounce his death, and urge me to destroy him?

Her. Oh, gods!
My heart, though full of rage, was free from malice;
And all my anger was excess of love.

Ores. Hear me but speak—Heaven knows, against my will——

Her. What had your rash, officious Greeks, dire bloodhounds!
To do with my revenge?
You saw the struggles of my soul; you heard me rave——
Are these the fruits of your detested love?
Avaunt! begone!
And leave me in Epirus.—I renounce
My friends, my country, Greece, and all mankind:
But chiefly I renounce thee! monster, thee! [Exit.

Ores. Am I awake? where am I? Soft, my soul;
Be not too rash.—Was that Hermione?
Why should her anger thunder against me?
Was not this blood shed all by her command?—
I am, indeed, a most outrageous monster!
A ruffian, murderer, a base assassin!
And all to please a false, ungrateful woman.
Henceforward, let the laws of nature cease;
And, let the pale, that severs right and wrong,
Things sacred and profane, be broken down;
Gods in their temples, kings upon their thrones,
Are not in safety while Orestes lives.
Oh, never more shall my torn mind be heal'd,
Nor taste the gentle comforts of repose!
A dreadful band of gloomy cares surround me,
And lay strong siege to my distracted soul!

Enter PYLADES, *attended by* GREEKS.

Pyl. Haste, prince! let us begone! 'tis death to stay.
Andromache reigns queen: she gives the alarm,
And vows revenge upon the foes of Pyrrhus.
The people arm, and muster in the streets:
Our Greeks will not be able long to guard
The palace gates, and to secure our flight.
We must be speedy, sir.

Ores. You may depart,
My friends—Hermione and I remain.
Her cruelty has quite undone me!

Pyl. Alas, unhappy princess! she's no more!

Ores. Hermione no more!—Oh, all ye powers!

Pyl. Full of disorder, wildness in her looks,
With hands expanded, and dishevell'd hair,
Breathless and pale, with shrieks she sought the temple;
In the mid-way, she met the corps of Pyrrhus;
She *startled* at the sight; then, stiff with horror,

Gaz'd frightful! Waken'd from the dire amaze,
She rais'd her eyes to Heaven, with such a look
As spoke her sorrows, and reproach'd the gods;
Then plung'd a poniard deep within her breast,
And fell on Pyrrhus, grasping him in death.

Ores. I thank you, gods!—I never could expect
To be so wretched!—You have been industrious
To finish your decrees; to make Orestes
A dreadful instance of your power to punish;
I'm singled out to bear the wrath of Heaven.

Pyl. You hazard your retreat by these delays.
The guards will soon beset us. Your complaints
Are vain, and may be fatal.

Ores. True, my friend:
And therefore 'twas, I thank'd the bounteous gods.
My fate's accomplish'd—I shall die content.
Oh, bear me hence—Blow winds!

Pyl. Let us begone.

Ores. The murder'd lovers wait me—Hark! they call!
Nay, if your blood still reeks, I'll mingle mine:
One tomb will hold us all.

Pyl. Alas! I fear
His raving will return with his misfortunes.

Ores. I am dizzy!—Clouds!—Quite lost in utter darkness!
Guide me, some friendly pilot, through the storm.
I shiver! Oh, I freeze!—So—Light returns;
'Tis the grey dawn—See, Pylades! behold!—
I am encompass'd with a sea of blood!—
The crimson billows!—Oh! my brain's on fire!

Pyl. How is it, sir?—Repose yourself on me.

Ores. Pyrrhus, stand off!—What wouldst thou?—How he glares!
What envious hand has clos'd thy wounds?—Have at thee.
It is Hermione that strikes—Confusion!

She catches Pyrrhus in her arms.—Oh, save me!
How terrible she looks!—She knits her brow;
She frowns me dead! She frights me into madness!
Where am I?—Who are you?

Pyl. Alas, poor prince!

Ores. This is most kind, my Pylades—Oh, why,
Why was I born to give thee endless trouble?

Pyl. All will go well—He settles into reason.

Ores. Who talks of reason? Better to have none,
Than not enough.—Run, some one, tell my Greeks,
I will not have them touch the king—Now—now!
I blaze again!—See there—Look where they come!
A shoal of furies!—How they swarm about me!
My terror!—Hide me!—Oh, their snaky locks!
Hark, how they hiss!——See, see their flaming brands!
Now they let drive at me!—How they grin,
And shake their iron whips!—My ears! what yelling!
And see, Hermione!—she sets them on——
Thrust not your scorpions thus into my bosom!
Oh!—I am stung to death!—Dispatch me soon!
There—take my heart, Hermione!—Take it out!
Disjoint me!—kill me!—Oh, my tortur'd soul!

Pyl. Assist me, friends, to bear him off. [*Exeunt.*

Enter PHŒNIX, *attended by* GUARDS.

Phœn. All, all are fled!—Orestes is not here!—
Triumphant villains!—
The ambassador's escape
Declares his guilt.—Most bloody embassy!
Most unexampled deeds!—Where, where, ye gods,
Is majesty secure, if, in your temples,
You give it no protection!—See, the queen!

[*A Flourish of Trumpets.*

Enter ANDROMACHE *and* CEPHISA, *with* ATTENDANTS.

Andr. Yes, ye inhuman Greeks! the time will come,
When you shall dearly pay your bloody deeds!
How should the Trojans hope for mercy from you,
When thus you turn your impious rage on Pyrrhus;
Pyrrhus, the bravest man in all your league;
The man, whose single valour made you triumph!
[*A dead March behind.*
Is my child there?——
Ceph. It is the corpse of Pyrrhus;
The weeping soldiers bear him on their shields.
Andr. Ill-fated prince! too negligent of life,
And too unwary of the faithless Greeks!
Cut off, e'en in the prime of life; thy triumphs new,
And all thy glories in full blossom round thee!
The very Trojans would bewail thy fate.
Ceph. Alas, then, will your sorrows never end?
Andr. Oh, never, never!—While I live, my tears
Will never cease; for I was born to grieve.—
Give present orders for the fun'ral pomp:
[*To* PHŒNIX.
Let him be rob'd in all his regal state;
Place round him every shining mark of honour;
And let the pile, that consecrates his ashes,
Rise like his fame, and blaze above the clouds.
[*Exit* PHŒNIX—*A Flourish of Trumpets.*
Ceph. The sound proclaims th' arrival of the prince.
Andr. With open arms I'll meet him!—Oh, Cephisa!
A springing joy, mix'd with a soft concern,
A pleasure, which no language can express,
An ecstacy, that mothers only feel,
Plays round my heart, and brightens up my sorrow,
Like gleams of sunshine in a low'ring sky.

Though plung'd in ills, and exercis'd in care,
Yet never let the noble mind despair.
When press'd by dangers, and beset with foes,
The gods their timely succour interpose;
And, when our virtue sinks, o'erwhelm'd with grief,
By unforeseen expedients bring relief.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE END.

ZARA

ZARA;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By AARON HILL, Esq.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

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REMARKS.

This tragedy, by Voltaire, was translated, and brought on the English stage, by Aaron Hill—a man, whose various enterprises should be a caution to adventurers; for, in the boundless range of his attempts, he was never once completely successful.

Mr. Hill was born in London, 1684, and was, by descent, the legal heir of an estate in Wiltshire, of 2000*l.* a year. But the indiscretions of his father made this fortune, on his death, of no value to the son; and he was left, in childhood, dependent on his grandmother.

At the age of fourteen, Aaron had passed through Westminster School, and now gave evidence of that spirit of enterprise, which never forsook him during life. His near relation, Lord Paget, was, at this time, ambassador from England at the Ottoman court, and the youth resolved to set out, unprotected and alone, for Constantinople, to pay him a visit. He had never seen Lord Paget, yet that nobleman received him kindly, and conceived a favourable opinion of his talents, from this juvenile exploit.

That Mr. Hill possessed mental endowments, of no *very common* kind, is certain; but he appears to have

been so restless to display them, and so blind to their just appreciation, that, in his haste to do good, he often did ill, and never endeavoured to make a fortune that he did not lose one.

Not content with the high gratification of having beheld Turkey, Palestine, Egypt, and other famed countries, during his stay abroad,—on his return to England he had the hardihood, young as he was, to write his travels; and this puerile book made all he had seen of less use to his reputation, than if he had staid at home and seen nothing.

He now became a dramatic writer, and, with a mediocrity of success, joined to some interest with persons in power, he was made the manager of Drury Lane Theatre, and of the Opera Theatre in the Hay Market. But these situations were both relinquished in the course of a few months, on account of some misunderstanding with the Lord Chamberlain; and Mr. Hill immediately directed his attention to the making sweet oil from the beech nut, which should preclude the necessity of any such distillation from the olive.

His ingenuity here embroiled him in disputes with his associates in the concern; and, after the loss of time, content, and much money,—he turned his thoughts to an epic poem.

His biographer has, however, declared, that his poetry was but the mere offspring of hours relaxed from drier studies, and that he soon recalled his wandering fancy from the muses, and produced a *tract upon the art* of war—another upon agriculture.

Again he wrote a poem—it was called "The Northern Star," and recorded the heroic actions of the Czar Peter the Great. Several years afterwards, he received a gold medal from the Empress Catharine for his reward, and with it the promise of some papers, from which he was to write the Memoirs of the deceased Czar;—but the death of the Czarina deprived him of this honour.

Soon after the above disappointment, Mr. Hill contracted with the York Buildings Company, concerning woods of vast extent in Scotland, which were to be converted into timber for the uses of the navy; and great and various were his exertions on this occasion. The difficulties he encountered in conveying these trees down the river Spey were numerous beyond conception; he had the sagacity, however, to surmount them all, except the last; and that one destroyed the whole undertaking.

The want of a large sum of ready money was now the sole obstacle to his design of establishing a plantation upon an extensive territory in the south of Carolina, where he had purchased a grant from the Lords Proprietors;—and death deprived him of all the advantages he was about to reap, from having contrived to make pot-ash in England, equal to that which is brought, at much expense, from Russia.

Voltaire and Pope accomplished that notoriety for Aaron Hill, which all his own industry could never have done so effectually without them. The first has sent him down to posterity as his translator—the second as one of his dunces.

"Zara" was first performed in the year 1735, and is memorable, as well as for its own merits, for having first introduced Mrs. Cibber on the stage; who, though extremely young, had every talent of an actress so matured, that, in her whole life to come, there was no charm, no grace, to be improved,—all those which she possessed were so near perfection.

Mr. Hill, who is said to have been as excellent a judge of the abilities requisite for a performer as if he had practised the profession, received abundant praise for having encouraged Mrs. Cibber's attempt of this part; for having instructed her in it, and even foretold her extraordinary success:—but, as if no one event of this man's life should do him perfect credit, he encouraged, instructed, and predicted also in favour of the young gentleman who made his appearance that night in Osman, and whose total failure in the part, rendered all Mr. Hill's prescience at least doubtful.

It is impossible to read this play without being delighted, or to see it without being weary. Love is seldom the passion, or religion the subject, which pleases greatly on the stage—the one is hard for the actors to describe, the other is difficult for the auditors to reflect upon.

The English critic accuses this play of being filled with bigotry—but surely it is a pleasure to observe, that the author was no bigot. Divest him of the pernicious character attached to Voltaire, change but his well known opinions in regard to christianity, *and suppose* "Zara" the work of a religious man,—

it becomes instantly a production of most virtuous tendency.—It is surprising how the author, with his hatred to fanatics, could have the forbearance here to describe them with such good hearts, accompanied by such weak understandings! Remarkable instances of human imperfection only, but no traits of intentional guilt, blemish the characters of this drama. They are all amiable, and yet all are in an error.

It is objected by some commentators, that, in liberal notions, Voltaire has decidedly bestowed the superiority upon the unbeliever Osman. The christians are certainly made the most intolerant; but, surely, in that, the author meant no disgrace to them; for the French nation, at the period this play was written, esteemed the persecution of infidels and heretics as a holy employment, in which relaxation had been a crime.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

OSMAN	*Master Betty.*
LUSIGNAN	*Mr. Murray.*
CHATILLON	*Mr. Chapman.*
NERESTAN	*Mr. C. Kemble.*
ORASMIN	*Mr. Claremont.*
MELIDOR	*Mr. Jefferies.*
ZARA	*Miss Smith.*
SELIMA	*Mrs. Humphries.*

ZARA.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Seraglio.

Enter ZARA *and* SELIMA.

Sel. It moves my wonder, young and beauteous Zara,
Whence these new sentiments inspire your heart!
Your peace of mind increases with your charms;
Tears now no longer shade your eyes' soft lustre:
You meditate no more those happy climes,
To which Nerestan will return to guide you.

Zara. Since after two long years he not returns,
'Tis plain his promise stretch'd beyond his power.
I own
I once admir'd the unprofitable zeal,
But now it charms no longer.—

Sel. What if yet,
He, faithful, should return, and hold his vow;
Would you not, then——

Zara. No matter—Time is past,
And every thing is chang'd——

Sel. But, whence comes this?

Zara. Go—'twere too much to tell thee Zara's fate:
The sultan's secrets, all, are sacred here:
But my fond heart delights to mix with thine.
Some three months past, when thou, and other slaves,
Were forc'd to quit fair Jordan's flow'ry bank;
Heav'n, to cut short the anguish of my days,
Rais'd me to comfort by a powerful hand:
This mighty Osman!——
Sel. What of him?
Zara. This sultan,
This conqueror of the christians, loves——
Sel. Whom?
Zara. Zara!——
Thou blushest, and, I guess, thy thoughts accuse me:
But, know me better—'twas unjust suspicion.
All emperor as he is, I cannot stoop
To honours, that bring shame and baseness with them:
He offers marriage; and its rites now wait
To crown me empress of this eastern world.
Sel. Your virtue and your charms deserve it all:
My heart is not surpris'd, but struck to hear it.
If to be empress can complete your happiness,
I rank myself, with joy, among your slaves.
Zara. Be still my equal—and enjoy my blessings;
For, thou partaking, they will bless me more.
Sel. Alas! but Heaven! will it permit this marriage?
Will not this grandeur, falsely call'd a bliss,
Plant bitterness, and root it in your heart?
Have you forgot you are of christian blood?
Zara. Ah me! What hast thou said? Why would'st thou thus
Recall my wav'ring thoughts? How know I, what,
Or whence I am? Heaven kept it hid in darkness,
Conceal'd me from myself, and from my blood.
Sel. Nerestan, who was born a christian, here,
Asserts, that you, like him, had christian parents;

Besides—that cross, which, from your infant years,
Has been preserv'd, was found upon your bosom,
As if design'd by Heaven, a pledge of faith
Due to the God, you purpose to forsake!

Zara. This cross, as often as it meets my eye,
Strikes through my heart a kind of awful fear!
I honour, from my soul, the christian laws,
Those laws, which, softening nature by humanity,
Melt nations into brotherhood;—no doubt
Christians are happy; and 'tis just to love them.

Sel. Why have you, then, declar'd yourself their foe?
Why will you join your hand with this proud Osman's,
Who owes his triumph to the christians' ruin?

Zara. Ah!—Who could slight the offer of his heart?
Nay—for I mean to tell thee all my weakness,
Perhaps I had, ere now, profess'd thy faith,
But Osman lov'd me—and I've lost it all:—
I think on none but Osman—my pleas'd heart,
Fill'd with the blessing to be lov'd by him,
Wants room for other happiness. Place thou
Before thy eyes his merit and his fame,
His youth, yet blooming but in manhood's dawn;
How many conquer'd kings have swell'd his pow'r!
Think, too, how lovely! how his brow becomes
This wreath of early glories!—Oh, my friend!
I talk not of a sceptre, which he gives me:
No—to be charm'd with that, were thanks too humble!
Offensive tribute, and too poor for love!
'Twas Osman won my heart, not Osman's crown:
I love not in him aught besides himself.
Thou think'st, perhaps, that these are starts of passion;
But, had the will of Heav'n less bent to bless him,
Doom'd Osman to my chains, and me to fill
The throne that Osman sits on—ruin and wretched-

Catch and consume my wishes, but I would—
To raise me to myself, descend to him.
Sel. Hark! the wish'd music sounds—'Tis he—*he* comes— [*Exit* SELIMA.

A grand March.

Enter OSMAN, *reading a Paper, which he delivers to* ORASMIN; *with* ATTENDANTS.

Osm. Wait my return—or, should there be a cause
That may require my presence, do not fear
To enter; ever mindful, that my own
[*Exit* ORASMIN, *&c.*
Follows my people's happiness.—At length,
Cares have releas'd my heart—to love and Zara.
Zara. 'Twas not in cruel absence, to deprive me
Of your imperial image—every where
You reign triumphant: memory supplies
Reflection with your power; and you, like Heaven,
Are always present—and are always gracious.
Osm. The sultans, my great ancestors, bequeath'd
Their empire to me, but their taste they gave not;
Their laws, their lives, their loves, delight not me:
I know our prophet smiles on am'rous wishes,
And opens a wide field to vast desire;
I know, that at my will I might possess;
That, wasting tenderness in wild profusion,
I might look down to my surrounded feet,
And bless contending beauties. I might speak,
Serenely slothful, from within my palace,
And bid my pleasure be my people's law.
But, sweet as softness is, its end is cruel;
I can look round, and count a hundred kings,
Unconquer'd by themselves, and slaves to others:
Hence was Jerusalem to christians lost;
Hence from the distant Euxine to the Nile,

The trumpet's voice has wak'd the world to war;
Yet, amidst arms and death, thy power has reach'd me;
For thou disdain'st, like me, a languid love;
Glory and Zara join—and charm together.

Zara. I hear at once, with blushes and with joy,
This passion, so unlike your country's customs.

Osm. Passion, like mine, disdains my country's customs;
I know to love you, Zara, with esteem;
To trust your virtue, and to court your soul.
Nobly confiding, I unveil my heart,
And dare inform you, that, 'tis all your own.
My joys must all be yours; only my cares
Shall lie conceal'd within, and reach not Zara.

Zara. How low, how wretched, was the lot of Zara!
Too poor, with aught but thanks, to pay such blessings!

Osm. Not so—I love—and would be lov'd again;
Let me confess it, I possess a soul,
That what it wishes, wishes ardently.
I should believe you hated, had you power
To love with moderation: 'tis my aim,
In every thing, to reach supreme perfection.
If, with an equal flame, I touch your heart,
Marriage attends your smile—But know, 'twill make
Me wretched, if it makes not Zara happy.

Zara. Ah, sir! if such a heart as gen'rous Osman's
Can, from my will, submit to take its bliss,
What mortal ever was decreed so happy!
Pardon the pride, with which I own my joy;
Thus wholly to possess the man I love!
To know, and to confess his will my fate!
To be the happy work of his dear hands!
To be—

Enter ORASMIN.

Osm. Already interrupted! What!
Who?—Whence?

Oras. This moment, sir, there is arriv'd
That christian slave, who, licens'd on his faith,
Went hence to France—and, now return'd, prays audience.

Osm. Admit him—What?—Why comes he not?

Oras. He waits without. No christian dares approach
This place, long sacred to the sultan's privacies.

Osm. Go—bring him with thee—monarchs, like the sun,
Shine but in vain, unwarming, if unseen;
With forms and rev'rence, let the great approach us;
Not the unhappy;—every place alike,
Gives the distress'd a privilege to enter.—
[*Exit* ORASMIN.
I think with horror on these dreadful maxims,
Which harden kings, insensibly, to tyrants.

Enter ORASMIN *with* NERESTAN.

Ner. Imperial sultan! honour'd, even by foes!
See me return'd, regardful of my vow,
And punctual to discharge a christian's duty.
I bring the ransom of the captive Zara,
Fair Selima, the partner of her fortune,
And of ten christian captives, pris'ners here.
You promis'd, sultan, if I should return,
To grant their rated liberty:—Behold,
I am return'd, and they are yours no more.
I would have stretch'd my purpose to myself,
But fortune has deny'd it;—my poor all
Suffic'd no further, and a noble poverty
Is now my sole possession.—I redeem
The promis'd christians; for I taught them hope:
But, for myself, I come again your slave,
To wait the fuller hand of future charity.

Osm. Christian! I must confess, thy courage charms me;

But let thy pride be taught, it treads too high,
When it presumes to climb above my mercy.
Go ransomless thyself, and carry back
Their unaccepted ransoms, join'd with gifts,
Fit to reward thy purpose; instead of ten,
Demand a hundred christians; they are thine:
Take them, and bid them teach their haughty country,
They left some virtue among Saracens.—
Be Lusignan excepted—He,
Who boasts the blood of kings, and dares lay claim
To my Jerusalem—that claim, his guilt!
Such is the law of states; had I been vanquish'd,
Thus had he said of me. I mourn his lot,
Who must in fetters, lost to daylight, pine,
And sigh away old age in grief and pain.
For Zara—but to name her as a captive,
Were to dishonour language;—she's a prize
Above thy purchase:—all the christian realms,
With all their kings to guide them, would unite
In vain, to force her from me—Go, retire—

Ner. For Zara's ransom, with her own consent,
I had your royal word. For Lusignan—
Unhappy, poor, old man——

Osm. Was I not heard?
Have I not told thee, christian, all my will?
What if I prais'd thee!—This presumptuous virtue,
Compelling my esteem, provokes my pride:
Begone—and, when to-morrow's sun shall rise
On my dominions, be not found—too near me.

[*Exit* NERESTAN.

Osm. Zara, retire a moment—
Assume, throughout my palace, sovereign empire,
While I give orders, to prepare the pomp
That waits to crown thee mistress of my throne.

[*Leads her out, and returns.*

Orasmin! didst thou mark th' imperious slave?
What could he mean?—he sigh'd—and, as he went,

Turn'd and look'd back at Zara!—Didst thou mark it?
Oras. Alas, my sovereign master! let not jealousy
Strike high enough to reach your noble heart.
Osm. Jealousy, saidst thou? I disdain it:—no!
Distrust is poor; and a misplac'd suspicion
Invites and justifies the falsehood fear'd.
Yet, as I love with warmth—so, I could hate!
But Zara is above disguise and art:——
My love is stronger, nobler, than my power.
Jealous!—I was not jealous!—if I was,
I am not—no—my heart—but, let us drown
Remembrance of the word:
My heart is fill'd with a diviner flame.—
Go, and prepare for the approaching nuptials;
Zara to careful empire joins delight;
I must allot one hour to thoughts of state,
Then, all the smiling day is love and Zara's.
[*Exit* ORASMIN.
Monarchs, by forms of pompous misery press'd,
In proud, unsocial, misery unbless'd,
Would, but for love's soft influence, curse their throne,
And among crowded millions live alone. [*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

Another Apartment.

NERESTAN *and* CHATILLON.

Chat. Matchless Nerestan! generous and great!
You, who have broke the chains of hopeless slaves!
You, christian saviour! by a Saviour sent?
Appear, be known, enjoy your due delight;
The grateful weepers wait to clasp your knees,
They throng to kiss the happy hand that sav'd them:
Indulge the kind impatience of their eyes,
And, at their head, command their hearts for ever.
Ner. Illustrious Chatillon! this praise o'erwhelms me;
What have I done beyond a christian's duty?
Beyond what you would, in my place, have done?
Chat. True—it is every honest christian's duty;
Nay, 'tis the blessings of such minds as ours,
For others' good, to sacrifice our own—
Yet, happy they, to whom Heav'n grants the power,
To execute, like you, that duty's call!
For us—the relics of abandon'd war,
Forgot in France, and, in Jerusalem,
Left to grow old in fetters.—Osman's father
Consign'd us to the gloom of a damp dungeon,
Where, but for you, we must have groan'd out life,
And native France have bless'd our eyes no more.
Ner. The will of gracious Heav'n, that soften'd Osman,

Inspir'd me for your sakes—But, with our joy,
Flows, mix'd, a bitter sadness—I had hop'd
To save from their perversion, a young beauty,
Who, in her infant innocence, with me,
Was made a slave by cruel Noradin;
When, sprinkling Syria with the blood of christians,
Cæsarea's walls saw Lusignan surpris'd,
And the proud crescent rise in bloody triumph.
From this seraglio, having young escap'd,
Fate, three years since, restor'd me to my chains;
Then, sent to Paris on my plighted faith,
I flatter'd my fond hope with vain resolves,
To guide the lovely Zara to that court;
But Osman will detain her—yet, not Osman,
Zara herself forgets she is a christian,
And loves the tyrant sultan!—Let that pass;
I mourn a disappointment still more cruel;
The prop of all our christian hope is lost!

Chat. Dispose me at your will—I am your own.

Ner. Oh, sir, great Lusignan, so long their captive,
That last of an heroic race of kings!
That warrior, whose past fame has fill'd the world,
Osman refuses to my sighs for ever!

Chat. Nay, then we have been all redeem'd in vain;
Perish that soldier, who would quit his chains,
And leave this noble chief behind in fetters.
Alas, you know him not as I have known him;
Thank Heav'n, that plac'd your birth so far remov'd
From those detested days of blood and woe.
But I, less happy, was condemn'd to see
Thy walls, Jerusalem, beat down,
And our last king, oppress'd with age and arms,
Murder'd, and bleeding o'er his murder'd sons!
Then, Lusignan, sole remnant of his race,
Rallying our fated few amidst the flames,
Fearless, beneath the crush of falling towers,
The conqu'rors and the conquer'd, groans and death!
Dreadful—and, waving in his hand his sword,

Red with the blood of infidels, cry'd out,
" This way, ye faithful christians! follow me."
Ner. How full of glory was that brave retreat!
Chat. 'Twas Heav'n, no doubt, that sav'd and led him on;
Pointed his path, and march'd our guardian guide:
We reach'd Cæsarea—there the general voice
Chose Lusignan, thenceforth to give us laws;
Alas! 'twas vain—Cæsarea could not stand
When Sion's self was fallen!—we were betray'd;
And Lusignan condemn'd, to length of life,
In chains, in damps, and darkness, and despair:
Yet great, amidst his miseries, he look'd,
As if he could not feel his fate himself,
But as it reach'd his followers. And shall we,
For whom our gen'rous leader suffer'd this,
Be vilely safe, and dare be bless'd without him?
Ner. Oh! I should hate the liberty he shar'd not!
I knew too well the miseries you describe,
For I was born amidst them. Chains and death,
Cæsarea lost, and Saracens triumphant,
Were the first objects which my eyes e'er look'd on.
Hurry'd, an infant, among other infants,
Snatch'd from the bosoms of their bleeding mothers,
A temple sav'd us, till the slaughter ceas'd;
Then were we sent to this ill-fated city,
Here, in the palace of our former kings,
To learn, from Saracens, their hated faith.
And be completely wretched.——Zara, too,
Shar'd this captivity; we both grew up
So near each other, that a tender friendship
Endear'd her to my wishes: My fond heart—
Pardon its weakness, bleeds to see her lost,
And, for a barb'rous tyrant, quit her God!
Chat. Such is the Saracens' too fatal policy!
Watchful seducers still of infant weakness:
Happy that you so young escap'd their hands!
But let us think——May not this Zara's int'rest,

Loving the sultan, and by him belov'd,
For Lusignan procure some softer sentence?
The wise and just, with innocence, may draw
Their own advantage from the guilt of others.

Ner. What prospect of success from an apostate?
On whom I cannot look without disdain;
And who will read her shame upon my brow.
The hardest trial of a generous mind
Is, to court favours from a hand it scorns.

Chat. Think it is Lusignan we seek to serve.

Ner. Well—it shall be attempted—Hark! who's this?
Are my eyes false; or is it really she?

Enter ZARA.

Zara. Start not, my worthy friend! I come to seek you;
The sultan has permitted it;
It pleas'd your pity, shall I say, your friendship?
Or rather, shall I call it generous charity?
To form that noble purpose, to redeem
Distressful Zara—you procur'd my ransom,
And with a greatness that out-soar'd a crown,
Return'd, yourself a slave, to give me freedom;
But Heav'n has cast our fate for different climes:
Here, in Jerusalem, I fix for ever;
Yet, among all the shine that marks my fortune,
I shall with frequent tears remember yours;
Your goodness will for ever sooth my heart,
And keep your image still a dweller there:
Warm'd by your great example to protect
That faith, that lifts humanity so high,
I'll be a mother to distressful christians.

Ner. How!—You protect the christians! you, who can
Abjure their saving truth, and coldly see
Great Lusignan, their chief, die slow in chains!

Zara. To bring him freedom you behold me here;

You will this moment meet his eyes in joy.
Chat. Shall I then live to bless that happy hour?
Zara. See where they bring the good old chief, grown dim
With age, by pain and sorrows hasten'd on!

Enter LUSIGNAN, *led in by two* GUARDS.

Lus. Where am I? From the dungeon's depth, what voice
Has call'd me to revisit long-lost day?
Am I with christians?—I am weak—forgive me,
And guide my trembling steps. I'm full of years;
My miseries have worn me more than age.
Am I in truth at liberty? [*Seating himself.*
Chat. You are;
And every christian's grief takes end with yours.
Lus. O, light! O, dearer far than light, that voice!
Chatillon, is it you? my fellow martyr!
And shall our wretchedness, indeed, have end?
In what place are we now?—my feeble eyes,
Disus'd to daylight, long in vain to find you.
Chat. This was the palace of your royal fathers:
'Tis now the son of Noradin's seraglio.
Zara. The master of this place—the mighty Osman,
Distinguishes, and loves to cherish virtue.
This generous Frenchman, yet a stranger to you,
Drawn from his native soil, from peace and rest,
Brought the vow'd ransoms of ten christian slaves,
Himself contented to remain a captive:
But Osman, charm'd by greatness like his own,
To equal what he lov'd, has giv'n him you.
Lus. So gen'rous France inspires her social sons!
They have been ever dear and useful to me—
Would I were nearer to him——Noble sir,
[NERESTAN *approaches.*
How have I merited, that you for me
Should pass such distant seas, to bring me blessings,
And hazard your own safety for my sake?
Ner. My name, sir, is Nerestan; born in Syria,

I wore the chains of slavery from my birth;
Till quitting the proud crescent for the court
Where warlike Lewis reigns, beneath his eye
I learnt the trade of arms;
Your sight, unhappy prince, would charm his eye;
That best and greatest monarch will behold
With grief and joy these venerable wounds,
And print embraces where your fetters bound you.
All Paris will revere the cross's martyr.

Lus. Alas! in times long past, I've seen its glory:
When Philip the victorious liv'd, I fought
Abreast with Montmorency and Melun,
D'Estaing, De Neile, and the far-famous Courcy;—
Names which were then the praise and dread of war;
But what have I to do at Paris now?
I stand upon the brink of the cold grave;
That way my journey lies—to find, I hope,
The King of Kings, and ask the recompense
For all my woes, long suffer'd for his sake——
You gen'rous witnesses of my last hour,
While I yet live, assist my humble prayers,
And join the resignation of my soul.
Nerestan! Chatillon!—and you, fair mourner!
Whose tears do honour to an old man's sorrows!
Pity a father, the unhappiest sure
That ever felt the hand of angry Heaven!
My eyes, though dying, still can furnish tears;
Half my long life they flow'd, and still will flow!
A daughter and three sons, my heart's proud hopes,
Were all torn from me in their tend'rest years—
My friend Chatillon knows, and can remember—

Chat. Would I were able to forget your woe.

Lus. Thou wert a pris'ner with me in Cæsarea,
And there beheldst my wife and two dear sons
Perish in the flames.

Chat. A captive, and in fetters,
I could not help them.

Lus. I know thou couldst not—
Oh, 'twas a dreadful scene! these eyes beheld it—

Husband and father, helpless I beheld it.—
Deny'd the mournful privilege to die!
Oh, my poor children! whom I now deplore;
If ye are saints in heav'n, as sure ye are,
Look with an eye of pity on that brother,
That sister whom you left!—If I have yet,
Or son or daughter:—for in early chains,
Far from their lost and unassisting father,
I heard that they were sent, with numbers more,
To this seraglio; hence to be dispers'd
In nameless remnants o'er the east, and spread
Our christian miseries round a faithless world.

Chat. 'Twas true,—for, in the horrors of that day,
I snatch'd your infant daughter from her cradle;
When, from my bleeding arms, fierce Saracens
Forc'd the lost innocent, who smiling lay,
And pointed, playful, at the swarthy spoilers!
With her, your youngest, then your only son,
Whose little life had reach'd the fourth sad year,
And just giv'n sense to feel his own misfortunes,
Was order'd to this city.

Ner. I, too, hither,
Just at that fatal age, from lost Cæsarea,
Came in that cloud of undistinguish'd christians.—

Lus. You!—came you thence?—Alas! who knows but you
Might heretofore have seen my two poor children.
[*Looking up.*
Hah, Madam! that small ornament you wear,
Its form a stranger to this country's fashion,
How long has it been yours?

Zara. From my first birth, sir—
Ah, what! you seem surpris'd?—why should this move you?

Lus. Would you confide it to my trembling hands?

Zara. To what new wonders am I now reserv'd?
Oh, sir! what mean you?

Lus. Providence and Heaven!

Oh failing eyes, deceive ye not my hope?
Can this be possible?—Yes, Yes—'tis she;
This little cross——I know it, by sure marks!
Oh, take me, Heav'n! While I can die with joy——
Zara. Oh, do not, sir, distract me!—rising thoughts,
And hopes, and fears, o'erwhelm me!
Lus. Tell me yet,
Has it remain'd for ever in your hands
What—both brought captives from Cæsarea hither?
Zara. Both, both—
Lus. Their voice! their looks!
The living images of their dear mother!
O God! who seest my tears, and know'st my thoughts,
Do not forsake me at this dawn of hope—
Strengthen my heart, too feeble for this joy.
Madam! Nerestan!—Help me, Chatillon! [*Rising.*
Nerestan, hast thou on thy breast a scar,
Which, ere Cæsarea fell, from a fierce hand,
Surprising us by night, my child receiv'd?
Ner. Bless'd hand!—I bear it,—sir, the mark is there!
Lus. Merciful Heaven!
Zara. [*Kneeling.*] My father!—Oh!—
Lus. Oh, my children!
Lus. My son! my daughter! lost in embracing you.
I would now die, lest this should prove a dream.
Lus. Again I find you—dear in wretchedness:
Oh, my brave son—and thou, my nameless daughter;
Now dissipate all doubt, remove all dread:
Has Heaven, that gives me back my children—giv'n them,
Such as I lost them?—Come they christians to me?
One weeps—and one declines a conscious eye!
Your silence speaks—too well I understand it!
Zara. I cannot, sir, deceive you—Osman's laws
Were mine—and Osman is not christian.——
Lus. Her words are thunder bursting on my head;
Wer't not for thee, my son, I now should die;

Full sixty years I fought the christians' cause,
Saw their doom'd temple fall, their power destroy'd:
Twenty, a captive, in a dungeon's depth,
Yet never for myself my tears sought Heaven;
All for my children rose my fruitless prayers:
Yet what avails a father's wretched joy?
I have a daughter gain'd, and Heav'n an enemy!
Oh, my misguided daughter, lose not thy faith!
Reclaim thy birthright—think upon the blood
Of twenty christian kings, that fills thy veins;
What would thy mother feel, to see thee thus!
She and thy murder'd brothers!—think they call thee!
Think that thou seest them stretch their bloody arms,
And weep, to win thee from their murd'rer's bosom.
Ev'n in the place where thou betray'st thy God,
He dy'd, my child, to save thee.—Turn thy eyes
And see; for thou art near his sacred sepulchre;
Thou canst not move a step, but where he trod!
Thou tremblest—Oh! admit me to thy soul!
Kill not thy aged, thy afflicted, father!
Take not, thus soon, again, the life thou gav'st him;
Shame not thy mother—nor renounce thy God.——
'Tis past—Repentance dawns in thy sweet eyes;
I see bright truth descending to thy heart,
And now, my long lost child is found for ever.

Zara. Oh, my father!
Dear author of my life, inform me, teach me,
What should my duty do?

Lus. By one short word,
To dry up all my tears, and make life welcome,
Say, thou art a christian.

Zara. Sir, I am a christian.

Lus. Receive her, gracious Heaven! and bless her, for it!

Enter ORASMIN.

Oras. Madam, the sultan order'd me to tell you,
That he expects, you instant quit this place,

And bid your last farewell to these vile chris
You, captive Frenchmen, follow me; for you,
It is my task to answer.——
Chat. Still new miseries!
How cautious man should be, to say, I'm happy!
Lus. These are the times, my friends, to try ou
firmness,
Our christian firmness.——
Zara. Alas, sir! Oh!
Lus. Oh, you!—I dare not name you:
Farewell—but come what may, be sure remember
You keep the fatal secret! for the rest,
Leave all to Heaven—be faithful, and be blest.
[*Exeunt*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Seraglio.

OSMAN *and* ORASMIN.

Osm. Orasmin, this alarm was false and groun
less;
Lewis no longer turns his arm on me:
The French, grown weary by a length of woes,
Wish not at once to quit their fruitful plains,
And famish on Arabia's desert sands:

Their ships, 'tis true, have spread the Syrian seas :
And Lewis, hovering o'er the coast of Cyprus,
Alarms the fears of Asia—But I've learnt,
That steering wide from our unmenac'd ports,
He points his thunder at th' Egyptian shore.
There let him war, and waste my enemies ;
Their mutual conflict will but fix my throne.——
Release those christians—I restore their freedom ;
'Twill please their master, nor can weaken me :
Transport them at my cost, to find their king ;
I wish to have him know me : carry thither
This Lusignan, whom, tell him, I restore,
Because I cannot fear his fame in arms;
But love him for his virtue and his blood.
Tell him, my father having conquer'd twice,
Condemn'd him to perpetual chains: but I
Have set him free, that I may triumph more.

Oras. The christians gain an army in his name.

Osm. I cannot fear a sound.—

Oras. But, sir—should Lewis——

Osm. Tell Lewis and the world—It shall be so :
Zara propos'd it, and my heart approves :
Thy statesman's reason is too dull for love !
But I talk on, and waste the smiling moments.
For one long hour I yet defer my nuptials;
But 'tis not lost, that hour ! 'twill be all hers !
She would employ it in a conference
With that Nerestan, whom thou know'st——that christian !

Oras. And have you, sir, indulg'd that strange desire ?

Osm. What mean'st thou ? They were infant slaves together ;
Friends should part kind, who are to meet no more.
When Zara asks, I will refuse her nothing:
Restraint was never made for those we love.
Down with those rigours of the proud seraglio ;
I hate its laws—where blind austerity

Sinks virtue to necessity—My blood
Disclaims your Asian jealousy;——I hold
The fierce, free plainness of my Scythian ancestors,
Their open confidence, their honest hate,
Their love unfearing, and their anger told.
Go—the good christian waits—conduct him to her;
Zara expects thee—What she wills, obey.
[*Exit* OSMAN.

Oras. Ho! christian! enter——wait a moment here.

Enter NERESTAN.

Zara will soon approach—I go to find her.
[*Exit* ORASMIN.

Ner. In what a state, in what a place, I leave her!
She's here——

Enter ZARA.

Thank Heaven, it is not, then, unlawful
To see you, yet once more, my lovely sister!
For Lusignan——
His last sad hour's at hand—
Oh! let not doubt
Disturb his parting moments with distrust;
Let me, when I return to close his eyes,
Tell him,
You are confirm'd a christian!

Zara. What, am I not your sister? and shall you
Refuse me credit? You suppose me light;
You, who would judge my honour by your own,
Shall you distrust a truth I dar'd avow,
And stamp apostate on a sister's heart!

Ner. Ah! do not misconceive me!—If I err'd,
Affection, not distrust, misled my fear;
Your will may be a christian, yet not you;
Swear, swear by all the woes we all have borne,
By all the martyr'd saints, who call you daughter,

That you consent, this day, to seal our faith,
By that mysterious rite which waits your call.
Zara. I swear by Heaven, and all its holy host,
Its saints, its martyrs, its attesting angels,
And the dread presence of its living Author,
To have no faith but yours ; to die a christian !
But, tell me——nor be tender on this point,
What punishment your christian laws decree,
For an unhappy wretch, who, to herself
Unknown, and all abandon'd by the world,
Lost and enslav'd, has, in her sov'reign master,
Found a protector, generous as great,
Has touch'd his heart, and giv'n him all her own?
Ner. The punishment of such a slave should be
Death in this world——and pain in that to come.
Zara. I am that slave—
Ner. Destruction to my hopes!—Can it be you?
Zara. It is—Ador'd by Osman, I adore him:
This hour the nuptial rites will make us one.
Ner. What! marry Osman!—Let the world grow dark,
That the extinguish'd sun may hide thy shame!
Could it be thus, it were no crime to kill thee.
Zara. Strike, strike—I love him—yes, by Heav'n, I love him.
Ner. Death is thy due—but not thy due from me:
Yes—I will dare acquaint our father with it;
Departing Lusignan may live so long,
As just to hear thy shame, and die to 'scape it.
Zara. Stay—my too angry brother—stay—perhaps,
Zara has resolution great as thine:
'Tis cruel—and unkind!—Thy words are crimes;
My weakness but misfortune! Dost thou suffer;
I suffer more;—Oh! would to Heaven this blood
Of twenty boasted kings would stop at once,
And stagnate in my heart!—It then no more
Would rush in boiling fevers thro' my veins,

And ev'ry trembling drop be fill'd with Osman.
How has he lov'd me! how has he oblig'd me!
I owe thee to him!
For me, he softens the severe decrees
Of his own faith;—and is it just that mine
Should bid me hate him, but because he loves me?
No——I will be a christian——but preserve
My gratitude as sacred as my faith;
Ner. Here then, begin performance of thy vow;
Here in the trembling horrors of thy soul,
Promise thy king, thy father, and thy God,
Not to accomplish these detested nuptials,
Till first the rev'rend priest has clear'd your eyes,
Taught you to know, and giv'n you claim to Heav'n.
Promise me this——
Zara. So bless me Heaven, I do——
Go—hasten the good priest, I will expect him;
But first return—cheer my expiring father,
Tell him I am, and will be, all he wishes me:
Tell him, to give him life, 'twere joy to die.
Ner. I go—Farewell—farewell, unhappy sister!
[*Exit* NERESTAN.
Zara. I am alone—and now be just, my heart!
And tell me, wilt thou dare betray thy God?
What am I? What am I about to be?
Daughter of Lusignan—or wife to Osman?
Help me, Heaven!
To thy hard laws I render up my soul:
But, oh! demand it back—for now 'tis Osman's.

Enter OSMAN.

Osm. Shine out, appear, be found, my lovely Zara!
Impatient eyes attend—the rites expect thee;
And my devoted heart no longer brooks
This distance from its soft'ner!
Come, my slow love! the ceremonies wait thee;
Come, and begin from this dear hour my triumph.

Zara. Oh, what a wretch am I! Oh, grief! Oh, love!
Osm. Nay, Zara—give me thy hand, and come—
Zara. My lord! my sov'reign!
Heav'n knows this marriage would have been a bliss,
Above my humble hopes!—yet, witness, love!
Not from the grandeur of your throne, that bliss,
But from the pride of calling Osman mine,
But, as it is——these christians——
Osm. Christians! What!
How start two images into thy thoughts,
So distant——as the christians and my love!
Zara. That good old christian, rev'rend Lusignan,
Now dying, ends his life and woes together.
Osm. Well! let him die—What has thy heart to feel,
Thus pressing, and thus tender, from the death
Of an old wretched christian?—Thank our prophet,
Thou art no christian!—Educated here,
Thy happy youth was taught our better faith:
Sweet as thy pity shines, 'tis now mis-tim'd.
What! tho' an aged suff'rer dies unhappy,
Why should his foreign fate disturb our joys?
Zara. Sir, if you love me, and would have me think
That I am truly dear——
Osm. Heaven! if I love!——
Zara. Permit me——
Osm. What?
Zara. To desire——
Osm. Speak out.
Zara. The nuptial rites
May be deferr'd till——
Osm. What!—Is that the voice
Of Zara?
Zara. Oh, I cannot bear his frown!
Osm. Of Zara!
Zara. It is dreadful to my heart—
Pardon my grief——Alas! I cannot bear it;
There is a painful terror in your eye

That pierces to my soul——hid from your sight,
I go to make a moment's truce with tears,
And gather force to speak of my despair.
[*Exit disordered.*

Osm. I stand immoveable, like senseless marble;
Horror had frozen my suspended tongue;
And an astonish'd silence robb'd my will
Of power to tell her that she shock'd my soul!
Spoke she to me?—Sure I misunderstood her!
Could it be me she left?—What have I seen!

Enter ORASMIN.

Orasmin, what a change is here!—She's gone,
And I permitted it, I know not how.

Oras. Perhaps you but accuse the charming fault,
Of innocence, too modest oft in love.

Osm. But why, and whence those tears?—those looks! that flight!
That grief, so strongly stamp'd on every feature?
If it has been that Frenchman!—What a thought!
How low, how horrid a suspicion that!
The dreadful flash at once gives light and kills me;
But tell me, didst thou mark them at their parting?
Didst thou observe the language of their eyes?
Hide nothing from me——Is my love betray'd?
Tell me my whole disgrace: nay, if thou tremblest,
I hear thy pity speak, though thou art silent.

Oras. I did, 'tis true, observe some parting tears;
But they were tears of charity and grief:
I cannot think there was a cause deserving
This agony of passion——

Osm. Why no——I thank thee——
Orasmin, thou art wise! It could not be,
That I should stand expos'd to such an insult.
Thou know'st, had Zara meant me the offence,
She wants not wisdom to have hid it better:
How rightly didst thou judge!—Zara shall know it,

And thank thy honest service——After all,
Might she not have some cause for tears, which I
Claim no concern in—but the grief it gives her?
What an unlikely fear—from a poor slave,
Who goes to-morrow, and, no doubt, who wishes,
Nay, who resolves, to see these climes no more.

Oras. Why did you, sir, against our country's custom,
Indulge him with a second leave to come?
He said, he should return once more to see her.

Osm. Return! the traitor! he return!—Dares he
Presume to press a second interview?
Would he be seen again?——He shall be seen;
But dead.——I'll punish the audacious slave,
To teach the faithless fair to feel my anger.
Be still, my transports; violence is blind:
I know my heart at once is fierce and weak;
Rather than fall
Beneath myself, I must, how dear soe'er
It costs me, rise—till I look down on Zara?——
Away——but mark me——these seraglio doors,
Against all christians be they henceforth shut,
Close as the dark retreats of silent death.

[*Exit* ORASMIN.

What have I done, just Heav'n, thy rage to move,
That thou shouldst sink me down so low to love? [*Exit.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The Seraglio.

ZARA *and* SELIMA.

Sel. Ah, madam! how at once I grieve your fate,
And how admire your virtue!—Heaven permits,
And Heaven will give you strength, to bear misfortune;
To break these chains, so strong and yet so dear.
Zara. Oh, that I could support the fatal struggle!
Sel. To-night the priest,
In private introduc'd, attends you here;
You promis'd him admission——
Zara. Would I had not!
I promis'd too to keep this fatal secret;
Compell'd to silence, Osman is enrag'd,
Suspicion follows, and I lose his love.

Enter OSMAN.

Osm. Madam! there was a time when my charm'd heart
Made it a virtue to be lost in love;
When without blushing I indulg'd my flame,
And every day still made you dearer to me.
You taught me, madam, to believe my love
Rewarded and return'd—nor was that hope,
Methinks, too bold for reason. Emperors,
Who chuse to sigh devoted at the feet
Of beauties, whom the world conceive their slaves,

Have fortune's claim, at least, to sure success:
But 'twere prophane to think of power in love.
Dear as my passion makes you, I decline
Possession of her charms, whose heart's another's.
You will not find me a weak, jealous lover,
By coarse reproaches, giving pain to you,
And shaming my own greatness—wounded deeply,
Yet shunning and disdaining low complaint,
I come——to tell you——
Osman, in every trial, shall remember
That he is emperor——Whate'er I suffer,
'Tis due to honour that I give up you,
And to my injur'd bosom take despair,
Rather than shamefully possess you sighing,
Convinc'd those sighs were never meant for me—
Go, madam—you are free—from Osman's pow'r,
Expect no wrongs, but see his face no more.

Zara. At last, 'tis come—the fear'd, the murd'ring moment
Is come—and I am curs'd by earth and Heaven!
[*Kneels.*
If it is true that I am lov'd no more——
If you——

Osm. It is too true, my fame requires it;
It is too true, that I unwilling leave you:
That I at once renounce you and adore——
Zara!—you weep!

Zara. If I am doom'd to lose you,
If I must wander o'er an empty world,
Unloving and unlov'd—Oh! yet, do justice
To the afflicted—do not wrong me doubly:
Punish me, if 'tis needful to your peace,
But say not, I deserv'd it——
May Heav'n, that punishes, for ever hate me,
If I regret the loss of aught but you.

Osm. What! is it love, to force yourself to wound
The heart you wish to gladden? But I find

Lovers least know themselves; for I believ'd,
That I had taken back the power I gave you;
Yet see!—you did but weep, and have resum'd me!
Proud as I am—I must confess, one wish
Evades my power—the blessing to forget you.
Zara—thy tears were form'd to teach disdain,
That softness can disarm it.—'Tis decreed,
I must for ever love,—but from what cause,
If thy consenting heart partakes my fires,
Art thou reluctant to a blessing meant me?
Speak!—Is it artifice?
Oh! spare the needless pains—Art was not made
For Zara.—Art, however innocent,
Looks like deceiving—I abhorr'd it ever.
Zara. Alas! I have no art; not even enough
To hide this love, and this distress you give me.
Osm. New riddles! Speak with plainness to my soul;
What canst thou mean?
Zara. I have no power to speak it.
Osm. Is it some secret dangerous to my state?
Is it some christian plot grown ripe against me?
Zara. Lives there a wretch so vile as to betray you?
Osman is bless'd beyond the reach of fear:
Fears and misfortunes threaten only Zara.
Osm. Why threaten Zara?
Zara. Permit me, at your feet,
Thus trembling, to beseech a favour from you.
Osm. A favour! Oh, you guide the will of Osman.
Zara. But this day;
But this one sad, unhappy day, permit me,
Alone, and far divided from your eye,
To cover my distress, lest you, too tender,
Should see and share it with me—from to-morrow,
I will not have a thought conceal'd from you.
Osm. If it must be, it must.—Be pleas'd, my will
Takes purpose from your wishes; and consent

Depends not on my choice, but your decree:
Go—but remember how he loves, who thus
Finds a delight in pain, because you give it.
Zara. It gives me more than pain, to make you feel it.
Osm. And——can you, Zara, leave me?
Zara. Alas, my lord! [*Exit* ZARA.
Osm. It should be yet, methinks, too soon to fly me!
Too soon, as yet, to wrong my easy faith.
The more I think, the less I can conceive,
What hidden cause should raise such strange despair!
Now, when her hopes have wings, and every wish
Is courted to be lively!—When love,
And joy and empire press her to their bosom;
Yet, was I blameless?—No—I was too rash;
I have felt jealousy, and spoke it to her;
I have distrusted her—and still she loves:
Gen'rous atonement that!
I remark'd,
Ev'n while she wept, her soul, a thousand times,
Sprung to her lips, and long'd to leap to mine,
With honest, ardent utt'rance of her love.——
Who can possess a heart so low, so base,
To look such tenderness, and yet have none?

Enter MELIDOR *and* ORASMIN.

Mel. This letter, great disposer of the world!
Address'd to Zara, and in private brought,
Your faithful guards this moment intercepted,
And humbly offer to your sovereign eye.
Osm. Come nearer, give it me.—To Zara!—Rise!
Bring it with speed—Shame on your flattering distance!— [*Advancing, and snatching the Letter.*
Be honest,—and approach me like a subject,
Who serves the prince, yet not forgets the man.

Mel. One of the christian slaves, whom late your bounty
Releas'd from bondage, sought, with heedful guile,
Unnotic'd to deliver it.—Discover'd,
He waits, in chains, his doom from your decree.
Osm. Leave me! I tremble, as if something fatal
Were meant me from this letter—should I read it?
Oras. Who knows but it contains some happy truth,
That may remove all doubts, and calm your heart?
Osm. Be it as 'twill—it shall be read—
'Tis done—and now, [*Opens the Letter.*
Fate, be thy call obey'd——Orasmin, mark——

There is a secret passage tow'rd the mosque;
That way you might escape; and, unperceiv'd,
Fly your observers, and fulfil our hope;
Despise the danger, and depend on me,
Who wait you, but to die, if you deceive.

Hell! tortures! death! and woman!—What, Orasmin!
Are we awake? Heardst thou? Can this be Zara?
Oras. 'Would I had lost all sense—for what I heard
Has cover'd my afflicted heart with horror!
Osm. Thou seest how I am treated!
Oras. Monstrous treason!
To an affront like this you cannot—must not
Remain insensible—You, who but now,
From the most slight suspicion, felt such pain,
Must, in the horror of so black a guilt,
Find an effectual cure, and banish love.
Osm. Seek her this instant—go, Orasmin, fly—
Show her this letter—bid her read and tremble:
Then, in the rising horrors of her guilt,
Stab her unfaithful breast, and let her die.
Say, while thou strik'st——Stay, stay, return and *pity me;*
I will think first a moment—Let that christian

Be straight confronted with her—Stay—I will,
I will—I know not what!—'Would I were dead!
Would I had dy'd, unconscious of this shame!
Oras. Never did prince receive so bold a wrong!
Osm. See here detected this infernal secret!
This fountain of her tears, which my weak heart
Mistook for marks of tenderness and pain!
Why! what a reach has woman to deceive!
Under how fine a veil of grief and fear
Did she propose retirement till to-morrow!
And I, blind dotard! gave the fool's consent,
Sooth'd her, and suffer'd her to go!—She parted,
Dissolv'd in tears; and parted to betray me!
Oras. Could you, my gracious lord! forgive my zeal,
You would——
Osm. I know it—thou art right—I'll see her—
I'll tax her in thy presence;—I'll upbraid her—
I'll let her learn—Go—find, and bring her to me.
Oras. Believe me, sir, your threat'nings, your complaints,
What will they all produce, but Zara's tears,
To quench this fancy'd anger! Your lost heart,
Seduc'd against itself, will search but reasons
To justify the guilt, which gives it pain:
Rather conceal from Zara this discovery;
And let some trusty slave convey the letter,
Reclos'd, to her own hand—then shall you learn,
Spite of her frauds, disguise, and artifice,
The firmness, or abasement, of her soul.
Osm. Thy counsel charms me!
Here, take this fatal letter—chuse a slave,
Whom yet she never saw, and who retains
His try'd fidelity.—Despatch—begone——
[*Exit* ORASMIN.
Now, whither shall I turn my eyes and steps,
The surest way to shun her: and give time
For this discovering trial?——Heav'n! she's here!

Enter ZARA.

So, madam! fortune will befriend my cause,
And free me from your fetters.—You are met
Most aptly, to dispel a new ris'n doubt,
That claims the finest of your arts to gloss it.
Unhappy each by other, it is time
To end our mutual pain, that both may rest:
You want not generosity, but love;
My pride forgotten, my obtruded throne,
My favours, cares, respect, and tenderness,
Touching your gratitude, provok'd regard;
Till, by a length of benefits besieg'd,
Your heart submitted, and you thought 'twas love:
But you deceiv'd yourself, and injur'd me.
There is, I'm told, an object more deserving
Your love than Osman—I would know his name:
Be just, nor trifle with my anger: tell me,
Now, while expiring pity struggles faint;
While I have yet, perhaps, the pow'r to pardon,
Give up the bold invader of my claim,
And let him die to save thee. Thou art known;
Think and resolve—While I yet speak, renounce him;
While yet the thunder rolls suspended, stay it;
Let thy voice charm me, and recall my soul,
That turns averse, and dwells no more on Zara.

Zara. Can it be Osman speaks, and speaks to Zara?
If my heart
Deserves reproach, 'tis for, but not from, Osman.

Osm. What! does she yet presume to swear sincerity!
Oh, boldness of unblushing perjury!
Had I not seen; had I not read such proof
Of her light falsehood as extinguish'd doubt,
I could not be a man, and not believe her.

Zara. Alas, my lord! what cruel fears have seiz'd you?
What harsh, mysterious words, were those I heard?

Osm. What fears should Osman feel, since Zara loves him?

Zara. I cannot live, and answer to your voice,
In that reproachful tone; your angry eye
Trembles with fury while you talk of love.

Osm. Since Zara loves him!

Zara. Is it possible
Osman should disbelieve it?
Can it be kind? Can it be just to doubt me?

Osm. No; I can doubt no longer—You may retire.

[*Exit* ZARA.

Enter ORASMIN.

Orasmin, she's perfidious, even beyond
Her sex's undiscover'd power of seeming;
She's at the topmost point of shameless artifice!
An empress at deceiving!
Say, hast thou chos'n a slave?—Is he instructed?
Haste, to detect her vileness and my wrongs.

Oras. Punctual I have obey'd your whole command:
But have you arm'd, my lord, your injur'd heart,
With coldness and indifference? Can you hear,
All painless and unmov'd, the false one's shame?

Osm. Orasmin, I adore her more than ever.

Oras. My lord! my emperor! forbid it, Heaven!

Osm. I have discern'd a gleam of distant hope;
This hateful christian, the light growth of France,
Proud, young, vain, amorous, conceited, rash,
Has misconceiv'd some charitable glance,
And judg'd it love in Zara: he alone,
Then, has offended me. Is it her fault,
If those, she charms, are indiscreet and daring?
Zara, perhaps, expected not this letter;
And I, with rashness groundless as its writer's,
Took fire at my own fancy, and have wrong'd her.
Now, hear me with attention—Soon as night
Has thrown her welcome shadows o'er the palace;

When this Nerestan, this ungrateful christian,
Shall lurk in expectation near our walls,
Be watchful that our guards surprise and seize him;
Then, bound in fetters, and o'erwhelm'd with shame,
Conduct the daring traitor to my presence:—
But, above all, be sure you hurt not Zara;
Mindful to what supreme excess I love.
[*Exit* ORASMIN.
On this last trial all my hopes depend;
Prophet, for once thy kind assistance lend,
Dispel the doubts that rack my anxious breast;
If Zara's innocent, thy Osman's blest. [*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

The Seraglio.

ZARA *and* SELIMA.

Zara. Sooth me no longer with this vain desire;
To a recluse, like me, who dares henceforth
Presume admission!—the seraglio's shut—
Barr'd and impassable—as death to time!
My brother ne'er must hope to see me more:——
How now! what unknown slave accosts us here?

Enter MELIDOR.

Mel. This letter, trusted to my hands, receive,
In secret witness I am wholly yours.
[ZARA reads the Letter.

Sel. [*Aside.*] Thou everlasting Ruler of the world!
Shed thy wish'd mercy on our hopeless tears;
Redeem us from the hands of hated infidels,
And save my princess from the breast of Osman!

Zara. I wish, my friend, the comfort of your counsel.

Sel. Retire—you shall be call'd—wait near—Go, leave us. [*Exit* MELIDOR.

Zara. Read this, and tell me what I ought to answer:
For I would gladly hear my brother's voice.

Sel. Say, rather, you would hear the voice of Heav'n.
'Tis not your brother calls you, but your God.

Zara. I know it, nor resist his awful will;
Thou know'st that I have bound my soul by oath;
But can I—ought I—to engage myself,
My brother, and the christians, in this danger?

Sel. 'Tis not their danger that alarms your fears;
Your love speaks loudest to your shrinking soul;
This tiger, savage in his tenderness,
Courts with contempt, and threatens amidst softness;
Yet, cannot your neglected heart efface
His fated, fix'd impression.
But talk no more of this unhappy passion:
What resolution will your virtue take?

Zara. All things combine to sink me to despair:
From the seraglio death alone will free me.
I'll send my brother word he may expect me.
Call in the faithful slave——God of my fathers!
[*Exit* SELIMA.
Let thy hand save me, and thy will direct!

Enter SELIMA *and* MELIDOR.

Go—tell the christian, who entrusted thee,
That Zara's heart is fix'd, nor shrinks at danger;
And that my faithful friend will, at the hour,
Expect, and introduce him to his wish.
Away—— [Exeunt ZARA and SELIMA.

Enter OSMAN *and* ORASMIN.

Osm. Swifter, ye hours, move on; my fury glows
Impatient, and would push the wheels of time.
How now! What message dost thou bring? Speak boldly—
What answer gave she to the letter sent her?
Mel. She blush'd and trembled, and grew pale, and paus'd;
Then blush'd, and read it; and again grew pale;
And wept, and smil'd, and doubted, and resolv'd:
For after all this race of vary'd passions,
When she had sent me out, and call'd me back,
" Tell him (she cry'd) who has intrusted thee,
That Zara's heart is fix'd, nor shrinks at danger;
And that my faithful friend, will, at the hour,
Expect and introduce him to his wish."
Osm. Enough—begone—I have no ear for more.—
[*Exit* MELIDOR.
Leave me, thou too, Orasmin.—Leave me, life,
For ev'ry mortal aspect moves my hate:
Leave me to my distraction——I grow mad,
And cannot bear the visage of a friend,
Leave me to rage, despair, and shame and wrongs;
Leave me to seek myself, and shun mankind.
[*Exit* ORASMIN.
Who am I?—Heav'n! Who am I! What resolve I?
Zara! Nerestan! sound these words like names
Decreed to join?—Why pause I?—Perish Zara!——
'Woud I could tear her image from my heart! ——
Twere happier not to live at all, than live
Her scorn!

Enter ORASMIN.

Orasmin!—Friend! return; I cannot bear
This absence from thy reason: 'Twas unkind,
'Twas cruel to obey me, thus distress'd,
And wanting power to think, when I had lost thee.

How goes the hour? has he appear'd, this rival?
Perish the shameful sound——This villain christian!
Has he appear'd below?
Oras. Silent and dark,
Th' unbreathing world is hush'd, as if it heard,
And listen'd to your sorrows.
Osm. Oh, treacherous night!
Thou lend'st thy ready veil to ev'ry treason,
And teeming mischiefs thrive beneath thy shade.
Heardst thou nothing?
Oras. My lord!
Osm. A voice, like dying groans?
Oras. I listen, but can hear nothing.
Osm. Again!—look out—he comes—
Oras. Nor tread of mortal foot—nor voice I hear;
The still seraglio lies profoundly plung'd
In death-like silence! nothing stirs.—The air
Is soft as infant sleep, no breathing wind
Steals thro' the shadows, to awaken night.
Osm. Horrors a thousand times more dark than these,
Benight my suffering soul——Thou dost not know
To what excess of tenderness I lov'd her:
I knew no happiness, but what she gave me;
Nor could have felt a misery, but for her!
Pity this weakness——mine are tears, Orasmin,
That fall not oft, nor lightly.——
Oras. Tears?—Oh Heaven!
Osm. The first, which ever yet unmann'd my eyes!
Oh! pity Zara—pity me——Orasmin.
These but forerun the tears of destin'd blood!
Oras. Oh! my unhappy lord! I tremble for you—
Osm. Do—tremble at my sufferings, at my love;
At my revenge too, tremble—— for 'tis due,
And will not be deluded.
Oras. Hark! I hear
The steps of men, along the neighb'ring wall!

Osm. Fly—seize him—'tis Nerestan! Wait no chains;
But drag him down to my impatient eye.
[*Exit* ORASMIN.

Enter ZARA *and* SELIMA, *in the dark.*

Zara. Where art thou, Selima? Give me thy hand.
It is so dark, I tremble as I step
With fears and startings, never felt till now!
[*Exeunt* ZARA *and* SELIMA.

Osm. Damnation! 'tis her voice! the well-known sound,
That has so often charm'd me into baseness!
Oh, the perfidious hypocrite!——she goes
To meet th' inviting infidel!——now, now,
[*Drawing a Dagger.*
Revenge, stand firm, and intercept his wishes!
Revenge! on whom?—No matter—Earth and Heaven
Would blush, should I forbear: now—Zara, now!
[*Drops the Dagger.*
I must not, cannot strike; the starting steel,
Unwilling flies my hand, and shuns to wound her!

Enter ZARA *and* SELIMA.

Zara. This is the private path—come nearer; lead me—
Are we not notic'd, think'st thou!
Sel. Fear not, madam;
It cannot now be long, ere we shall meet him.
Osm. That word has given me back my ebbing rage.
[*Recovers the Dagger.*
Zara. I walk in terror, and my heart forebodes,
Who's there?—Nerestan! Is it you?—O welcome—
Osm. [*Stabbing her.*] This to thy heart—'Tis not the traitor meets thee,
'Tis the betray'd—who writes it in thy blood!

Zara. Oh, gracious Heaven! receive my parting soul,
And take thy trembling servant to thy mercy—[*Dies.*
Osm. Soul!—then revenge has reach'd thee—I will now
Haste from this fatal place—I cannot leave her!
Whom did I strike? Was this the act of love?
Swallow me, earth!—She's silent— Zara's dead!
And should I live to see returning day,
'Twill show me but her blood!—show me, left joyless,
In a wide, empty world, with nothing round me,
But penitence and pain—And yet, 'twas just;
Hark!——Destiny has sent her lover to me,
To fill my vengeance, and restore my joy!

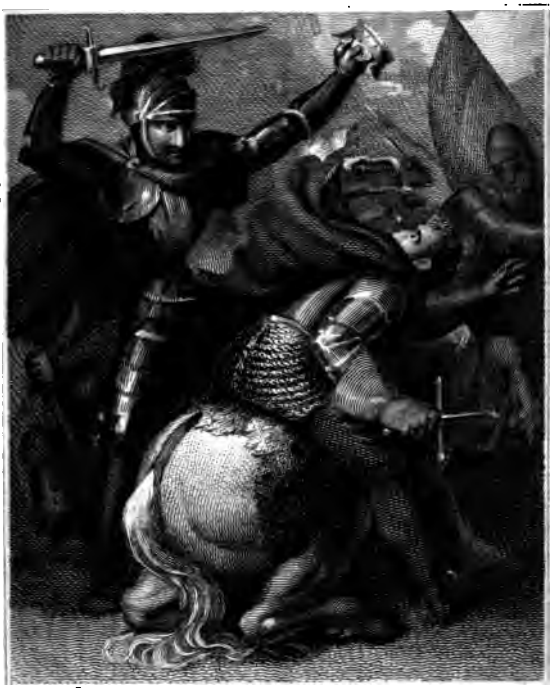
Enter ORASMIN *with* NERESTAN.

Approach, thou wretch! thou more than curs'd! come near——
Thou, who in gratitude for freedom gain'd,
Hast giv'n me miseries beyond thy own!
Thou heart of hero with a traitor's soul!
Go—reap thy due reward, prepare to suffer
Whate'er inventive malice can inflict,
To make thee feel thy death, and perish slow!
Are my commands obey'd?
Oras. All is prepar'd.
Osm. Thy wanton eyes look round in search of her,
Whose love descending to a slave like thee,
From my dishonour'd hand receiv'd her doom.
See, where she lies!——
Ner. Oh, fatal, rash mistake!
Osm. Dost thou behold her, slave?
Ner. Unhappy sister!
Osm. Sister!——Didst thou say, sister? If thou didst,
Bless me with deafness, Heaven!
Ner. Tyrant! I did——

She was my sister——All that now is left thee,
Despatch——From my distracted heart drain next
The remnant of the royal christian blood:
Old Lusignan, expiring in my arms,
Sent his too wretched son, with his last blessing,
To his now murder'd daughter!——
Osm. Thy sister!—Lusignan her father—Selima!
Can this be true?
Sel. Thy love was all the cloud, 'twixt her and heav'n!
Osm. Be dumb——for thou art base, to add distraction
To my already more than bleeding heart.
And was thy love sincere?—What then remains?
Ner. Why should a tyrant hesitate on murder!
There now remains but mine, of all the blood
Which, through thy father's cruel reign and thine,
Has never ceas'd to stream on Syria's sands!
Restore a wretch to his unhappy race;
Nor hope that torments, after such a scene,
Can force one feeble groan, to feast thy anger.
I waste my fruitless words in empty air;
The tyrant, o'er the bleeding wound he made,
Hangs his unmoving eye, and heeds not me.
Osm. Oh, Zara!—
Oras. Alas, my lord, return——whither would grief
Transport your generous heart?—This christian dog—
Osm. Take off his fetters, and observe my will:
To him and all his friends give instant liberty:
Pour a profusion of the richest gifts
On these unhappy christians; and when heap'd
With vary'd benefits, and charg'd with riches,
Give them safe conduct to the nearest port.
Oras. But, sir——
Osm. *Reply not*, but obey:——
Fly—nor dispute thy master's last command;

Thy prince, who orders—and thy friend, who loves thee!
Unhappy warrior—yet less lost than I—
Haste from our bloody land—and to thy own,
Convey this poor, pale object of my rage.
Thy king, and all his christians, when they hear
Thy miseries, shall mourn them with their tears;
But, if thou tell'st them mine, and tell'st them truly,
They, who shall hate my crime, shall pity me.
Take, too, this poniard with thee, which my hand
Has stain'd with blood far dearer than my own;
Tell them—with this I murder'd her I lov'd;
The noblest and most virtuous among women!
The soul of innocence, and pride of truth:
Tell them, I laid my empire at her feet:
Tell them, I plung'd my dagger in her blood;
Tell them, I so ador'd—and thus reveng'd her!
[*Stabs himself.*

THE END.



GRIFFITH.—VENGEANCE HE CRIED, AND WITH
ONE EAGER HAND GRIPD FAST MY BLADE
ACT V. SCENE 2.

GUSTAVUS VASA;

OR,

THE DELIVERER OF HIS COUNTRY;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By HENRY BROOKE, Esq.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
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REMARKS.

The writer of this tragedy, at the end of his labour, received a severe disappointment. "Gustavus Vasa" had been accepted by the managers of Drury Lane, in 1739, with high expectation of its success, and had even arrived at the last rehearsal, when an order came from the Lord Chamberlain's office, to prohibit its performance.

The reader will possibly observe some passages in the work, which will account for this mandate; yet the author felt himself aggrieved, and his friends considered him so deeply wronged, that the play was printed, and the sum of one thousand pounds immediately raised by its sale.

Under these circumstances it is not probable, that the influence of authority was a misfortune to the dramatist; on the contrary, his production was rendered popular by having excited opposition from the hand of power; and every reader was highly pleased with it as a literary performance; whereas, had those very persons seen it in action, upon the stage, no doubt but it would have proved a languid, if not a dull exhibition.

In evidence of this opinion, not one of the sentiments which were formerly dreaded by government, can apply to the present times; yet the play is seldom acted; and the reason is, because it is deficient both of interest and incident for representation. Its greatest merit, then, it seems, has been, in the giving a kind of seditious description of the blessing of liberty, which warmed the bosoms of all those, who fancied they did not enjoy it. But liberty, like meaner blessings, palls in the possession, and now, though an English audience still think themselves bound to applaud those sentences which boast of freedom, long use has made its charms so familiar, that no ceremonious courtesy to so old an acquaintance, will make a play attractive which has not other requisites.

This play should, properly, be called historical, for its foundation is the following page of history:— "Gustavus I. King of Sweden, known by the name of Gustavus Vasa, was born in 1490. He was the son of Eric Vasa, Duke of Gripsholm, and descended from the ancient kings of Sweden. Christiern II. King of Denmark, having got Gustavus into his hands, in the war in which he reduced Sweden, kept him several years prisoner at Copenhagen. He at length made his escape, and having prevailed on the Dalecarlians to throw off the Danish yoke, he put himself at their head." MOD. UNIV. HIST.

At this crisis the tragedy commences, and continues throughout an event of much interest, in the pe-

rusal, though not conducted with dramatic force or skill.

Mr. Brooke, the author, being a native of Ireland, while he resided at his paternal estate, in the county of Cavan, wrote some dramas for the Dublin stage; but the same spirit of persecution, as he has termed it, pursued him in Hibernia; and an opera, entitled "Jack the Giant Queller," after being performed one night with success, was forbidden by the Lord Lieutenant, ever to be acted again.

The love of liberty in Mr. Brooke, naturally increased the more he felt its loss; and, from a mere admirer, he became an enthusiast in the cause.—During the rebellion in 1745, he took an active part in politics, and wrote the "Farmer's Letters" in imitation of "The Drapier's" of Dean Swift, which gave high offence to the government of Ireland, whilst his friends declared, they only breathed the zeal of a true patriot. Such are the discordant sentiments of various readers!

Such also are the discordant sensations of certain writers with certain readers, that this author, in his public statement of facts, relative to the Lord Chamberlain's forbidding the performance of "Gustavus Vasa," on account of its disloyal tendency, thus asserts—"I was so far from a view of merit with the disaffected, that I looked on this performance as the highest compliment I could pay to the present establishment."

But partial judgment, in the case of literature, can-

not be better exemplified than in the following lines, extracted from a poem addressed to the author of Gustavus Vasa, by Paul Whitehead.

" Shakspeare's no more—lost was the poet's name,
Till thou, my friend, my genius, sprung to fame.
Lur'd by his laurels' never-fading bloom,
You boldly snatch'd the trophy from his tomb."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GUSTAVUS	*Master Betty.*
CHRISTIERN	*Mr. Murray.*
ARVIDA	*Mr. Johnston.*
PETERSON	*Mr. Brunton.*
LAERTES	*Mr. Claremont.*
ANDERSON	*Mr. Bennett.*
SIVARD	*Mr. Chapman.*
ARNOLDUS	*Mr. Creswell.*
MESSENGER	*Mr. Jefferies.*
OFFICER	*Mr. Treby.*
CHRISTINA	*Mrs. H. Johnston.*
AUGUSTA	*Mrs. St. Ledger.*
GUSTAVA	*Miss Brunton.*
MARIANA	*Mrs. Humphries.*

SOLDIERS, PEASANTS, MESSENGERS, *and* ATTENDANTS.

SCENE,—Dalecarlia, a Northern Province in Sweden.

GUSTAVUS VASA.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

The Inside of the Copper Mines in Dalecarlia.—GUSTAVUS *lying down in the Distance.*

Enter ANDERSON *and* ARNOLDUS.

And. You tell me wonders.
Arn. Soft, behold, my lord——
[*Points towards* GUSTAVUS.
Behold him stretch'd, where reigns eternal night,
The flint his pillow, and cold damps his cov'ring;
Yet bold of spirit, and robust of limb,
He throws inclemency aside, nor feels
The lot of human frailty.
And. What horrors hang around! the savage race.
Ne'er hold their den but where some glimm'ring ray.
May bring the cheer of morn—What then is he?
His dwelling marks a secret in his soul,
And whispers somewhat more than man about him.
Arn. Draw but the veil of his apparent wretchedness,

And you shall find, his form is but assum'd,
To hoard some wond'rous treasure, lodg'd within.
And. Let him bear up to what thy praises speak him,
And I will win him, spite of his reserve,
Bind him with sacred friendship to my soul,
And make him half myself.
Arn. 'Tis nobly promis'd;
For worth is rare, and wants a friend in Sweden;
And yet I tell thee, in her age of heroes,
When, nurs'd by freedom, all her sons grew great,
And ev'ry peasant was a prince in virtue;
I greatly err, or this abandon'd stranger
Had stepp'd the first for fame—though now he seeks
To veil his name, and cloud his shine of virtues;
For there is danger in them.
And. True, Arnoldus.
Were there a prince throughout the scepter'd globe,
Who search'd out merit for its due preferment,
With half that care our tyrant seeks it out
For ruin, happy, happy were that state,
Beyond the golden fable of those pure
And earliest ages——
And. When came this stranger hither?
Arn. Six moons have chang'd upon the face of night,
Since here he first arriv'd, in servile weeds,
But yet of mien majestic. I observ'd him,
And ever as I gaz'd, some nameless charm,
A wond'rous greatness, not to be conceal'd,
Broke through his form, and aw'd my soul before him.
Amid these mines he earns the hireling's portion;
His hands out-toil the hind, while on his brow
Sits Patience, bath'd in the laborious drop
Of painful industry—I oft have sought,
With friendly tender of some worthier service,
To win him from his temper; but he shuns
All offers, yet declin'd with graceful act,

Engaging beyond utt'rance; and at eve,
When all retire to some domestic solace,
He only stays, and, as you see, the earth
Receives him to her dark and cheerless bosom.
And. Has no unwary moment e'er betray'd
The labours of his soul, some fav'rite grief,
Whereon to raise conjecture?
Arn. I saw, as some bold peasants late deplor'd
Their country's bondage, sudden passion seiz'd,
And bore him from his seeming ease; strait his form
Was turn'd to terror, ruin fill'd his eye,
And his proud step appear'd to awe the world:
But sadness soon usurp'd upon his brow,
And the big tear roll'd graceful down his visage.
And. Forbear—he rises—Heavens, what majesty!
GUSTAVUS *comes forward.*
And. Your pardon, stranger, if the voice of virtue,
If cordial amity from man to man,
And somewhat that should whisper to the soul,
To seek and cheer the suff'rer, led me hither,
Impatient to salute thee. Be it thine
Alone to point the path of friendship out;
And my best pow'r shall wait upon thy fortunes.
Gust. There is a wond'rous test,
The truest, worthiest, noblest cause of friendship;
Dearer than life, than int'rest, or alliance,
And equal to your virtues.
And. Say——unfold.
Gust. Art thou a soldier, a chief lord in Sweden,
And yet a stranger to thy country's voice,
That loudly calls the hidden patriot forth?
But what's a soldier? What's a lord in Sweden?
All worth is fled, or fall'n—nor has a life
Been spar'd, but for dishonour; spar'd to breed
More slaves for Denmark, to beget a race
Of new-born virgins for th' unsated lust
Of our new masters. Sweden! thou'rt no more!
Queen of the North! thy land of liberty,

Thy house of heroes, and thy seat of virtues
Is now the tomb, where thy brave sons lie speechless;
And. O 'tis true.
But wherefore? To what purpose?
Gust. Think of Stockholm!
When Christiern seiz'd upon the hour of peace,
And drench'd the hospitable floor with blood;
Then fell the flow'r of Sweden, mighty names!
Her hoary senators, and gasping patriots!
The tyrant spoke, and his licentious band
Of blood-train'd ministry were loosed to ruin.
Husbands, sons, and sires
With dying ears drank in the loud despair
Of shrieking chastity. Is there a cause for this?
For sin without temptation, calm, cool villainy,
Delib'rate mischief, unimpassion'd lust,
And smiling murder? Lie thou there, my soul,
Sleep, sleep upon it, image not the form
Of any dream but this, 'till time grows pregnant,
And thou canst wake to vengeance.
And. Thou'st greatly mov'd me. Ha! thy tears start forth.
Yes, let them flow, our country's fate demands them;
But wherefore talk of vengeance? 'Tis a word
Should be engraven on the new fall'n snow,
Where the first beam may melt it from observance.
Vengeance on Christiern! Norway and the Dane,
The sons of Sweden, all the peopled North
Bends at his nod: my humbler boast of pow'r
Meant not to cope with crowns.
Gust. Then what remains
Is briefly this; your friendship has my thanks,
But must not my acceptance:—no——
First sink, thou baleful mansion, to the centre!
And be thy darkness doubled round my head;
Ere I forsake thee for the bliss of paradise,
To be enjoy'd beneath a tyrant's sceptre;

And. Nor I, while I can hold it; but, alas!
That is not in our choice.
Gust. Why? where's that pow'r, whose engines are of force
To bend the brave and virtuous man to slav'ry?
He has debauch'd the genius of our country,
And rides triumphant, while her captive sons
Await his nod! the silken slaves of pleasure,
Or fetter'd in their fears.
And. No doubt, a base submission to our wrongs
May well be term'd a voluntary bondage;
But, think, the heavy hand of pow'r is on us;
Of pow'r, from whose imprisonment and chains
Not all our freeborn virtue can protect us.
Gust. 'Tis there you err, for I have felt their force;
And had I yielded to enlarge these limbs,
Or share the tyrant's empire, on the terms
Which he propos'd—I were a slave indeed.
No—in the deep and poisonous damp of dungeons,
The soul can rear her sceptre, smile in anguish,
And triumph o'er oppression.
And. O glorious spirit! think not I am slack
To relish what thy noble scope intends,
But then the means, the peril, and the consequence!
Great are the odds, and who shall dare the trial?
Gust. I dare.
O wert thou still that gallant chief,
Whom once I knew! I cou'd unfold a purpose,
Would make the greatness of thy heart to swell,
And burst in the conception.
And. Give it utt'rance.—You say, you know me;
But give a tongue to such a cause as this,
And if you hold me tardy in the call,
You know me not—But thee, I've surely known;
For there is somewhat in that voice and form,
Which has alarm'd my soul to recollection;
But 'tis as in a dream, and mocks my reach.
Gust. Then name the man, whom it is death to know,

Or, knowing, to conceal—and I am he.

And. Gustavus! Heav'ns! 'Tis he! 'tis he himself!

Enter ARVIDA, *speaking to a* SERVANT.

Arv. I thank you, friend, he's here, you may retire. [*Exit* SERVANT.

And. Good morning to my noble guest, you're early! [GUSTAVUS *walks apart.*

Arv. I come to take a short and hasty leave:
'Tis said, that from the mountain's neighb'ring brow
The canvass of a thousand tents appears,
Whitening the vale—Suppose the tyrant there;
You know my safety lies not in the interview—
Ha! What is he, who, in the shreds of slavery,
Supports a step, superior to the state
And insolence of ermine?

Gust. Sure that voice
Was once the voice of friendship and Arvida!

Arv. Ha! Yes——'tis he!——ye pow'rs! it is Gustavus!

Gust. Thou brother of adoption! In the bond
Of ev'ry virtue wedded to my soul,
Enter my heart: it is thy property.

Arv. I'm lost in joy and wond'rous circumstance.

Gust. Yet, wherefore, my Arvida, wherefore is it,
That in a place, and at a time like this,
We should thus meet? Can Christiern cease from cruelty?
Say, whence is this, my brother? How escap'd you?
Did I not leave thee in the Danish dungeon?

Arv. Of that hereafter. Let me view thee first.
How graceful is the garb of wretchedness,
When worn by virtue! Fashions turn to folly;
Their colours tarnish, and their pomps grow poor
To her magnificence.

Gust. Yes, my Arvida.
Beyond the sweeping of the proudest train

That shades a monarch's heel, I prize this humble dress,
For it is sacred to my country's freedom.
A mighty enterprize has been conceiv'd,
And thou art come auspicious to the birth,
As sent to fix the seal of Heav'n upon it.
Arv. Point but thy purpose—let it be to bleed—
Gust. Your hands, my friends!
All. Our hearts.
Gust. I know they're brave.
Of such the time has need, of hearts like yours,
Faithful and firm, of hands inur'd and strong,
For we must ride upon the neck of danger,
And plunge into a purpose big with death.
And. Here let us kneel, and bind us to thy side.
Gust. No, hold—if we want oaths to join us,
Swift let us part, from pole to pole asunder.
A cause like ours is its own sacrament;
Truth, justice, reason, love, and liberty,
Th' eternal links that clasp the world are in it;
And he, who breaks their sanction, breaks all law,
And infinite connexion.
Arn. True, my lord.
And. And such the force I feel.
Arv. And I.
Arn. And all.
Gust. Know, then, that ere our royal Stenon fell,
While this my valiant cousin and myself,
By chains and treach'ry lay detain'd in Denmark,
Upon a dark and unsuspected hour
The bloody Christiern sought to take my head.
I escap'd,
Led by a gen'rous arm, and some time lay
Conceal'd in Denmark. For my forfeit head
Became the price of crowns, each port and path
Was shut against my passage, 'till I heard
That Stenon, valiant Stenon fell in battle,
And freedom was no more. O then what bounds
Had pow'r to hem the desp'rate I o'erpass'd them,

Travers'd all Sweden, thro' ten thousand foes,
Impending perils, and surrounding tongues,
That from himself inquir'd Gustavus out.
Witness, my country, how I toil'd to wake
Thy sons to liberty! in vain——for fear,
Cold fear had seiz'd on all——Here last I came,
And shut me from the sun, whose hateful beams
Serv'd but to show the ruins of my country.
When here, my friends, 'twas here at length I found
What I had left to look for, gallant spirits,
In the rough form of untaught peasantry.
And. Indeed they once were brave; our Dalecarlians
Have oft been known to curb despotic sway;
And, as their only wealth has been their liberty,
From all th' unmeasur'd graspings of ambition
They've held that gem untouch'd—tho' now 'tis fear'd—
Gust. It is not fear'd——I say, they still shall hold it.
I've search'd these men, and find them like the soil,
Barren without, and to the eye unlovely,
But they've their minds within; and this the day
In which I mean to prove them.
Arn. O Gustavus!
Most aptly hast thou caught the passing hour,
Upon whose critical and fated hinge
The state of Sweden turns.
Gust. And to this hour
I've therefore held me in this darksome womb,
That sends me forth as to a second birth
Of freedom, or thro' death to reach eternity.
This day, return'd with ev'ry circling year,
In thousands pours the mountain peasants forth,
Each with his batter'd arms and rusty helm,
In sportive discipline well train'd, and prompt
Against the day of peril—Thus disguis'd,
Already have I stirr'd their latent sparks
Of slumb'ring virtue, apt as I could wish
To warm before the lightest breath of liberty.

Arn. How will they kindle, when, confess'd to view,
Once more their lov'd Gustavus stands before them.
Arv. It cannot fail.
And. It has a glorious aspect.
Arv. Now, Sweden! rise and re-assert thy rights,
Or be for ever fall'n.
And. Then be it so.
Arn. Lead on, thou arm of war,
To death or victory.
Gust. Why thus, my friends, thus join'd in such a cause,
Are we not equal to a host of slaves!
You say, the foe's at hand—Why, let them come,
Steep are our hills, nor easy of access,
And few the hours we ask for their reception.
For I will take these rustic sons of liberty
In the first warmth and hurry of their souls;
And should the tyrant then attempt our heights,
He comes upon his fate—Arise, thou sun!
Haste, haste to rouse thee to the call of liberty,
That shall once more salute thy morning beam,
And hail thee to thy setting.
Arv. Were it not worth the hazard of a life,
To know if Christiern leads his pow'rs in person,
And what his scope intends? Be mine that task.
Ev'n to the tyrant's tent I'll win my way,
And mingle with his councils.
Gust. Go, my friend.
Dear as thou art, whene'er our country calls,
Friends, sons, and sires should yield their treasure up,
Nor own a sense beyond the public safety.
But, tell me, my Arvida, ere thou goest,
Tell me what hand has made thy friend its debtor,
And giv'n thee up to freedom and Gustavus?
Arv. Ha! let me think of that, 'tis sure she loves him. [Aside.

Away, thou skance and jaundic'd eye of jealousy,
That tempts my soul to sicken at perfection;
Away! I will unfold it——To thyself
Arvida owes his freedom.

Gust. How, my friend?

Arv. Some months are pass'd, since, in the Danish dungeon,
With care emaciate, and unwholesome damps,
Sick'ning I lay, chain'd to my flinty bed,
And call'd on death to ease me——straight a light
Shone round, as when the ministry of Heav'n
Descends to kneeling saints. But, Oh! the form
That pour'd upon my sight——Ye angels, speak?
For ye alone are like her; or present
Such visions pictur'd to the nightly eye
Of fancy tranc'd in bliss. She then approach'd,
The softest pattern of embodied meekness,
For pity had divinely touch'd her eye,
And harmoniz'd her motions——Ah, she cry'd,
Unhappy stranger, art not thou the man,
Whose virtues have endear'd thee to Gustav?

Gust. Gustavus did she say!

Arv. Yes.
Loos'd from my bonds, I rose, at her command;
When scarce recov'ring speech, I would have kneel'd,
But haste thee, haste thee for thy life, she cry'd;
And Oh, if e'er thy envied eyes behold
Thy lov'd Gustavus; say, a gentle foe
Has giv'n thee to his friendship.

Gust. You've much amaz'd me! is her name a secret?

Arv. To me it is—but you, perhaps, may guess.

Gust. No, on my word.

Arv. You too had your deliv'rer.

Gust. A kind, but not a fair one—Well, my friends,
Our cause is ripe, and calls us forth to action.
Tread ye not lighter? Swells not ev'ry breast

With ampler scope to take your country in,
And breathe the cause of virtue? Rise, ye Swedes!
Rise greatly equal to this hour's importance.
On us the eyes of future ages wait,
And this day's close decides our country's fate.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

The Camp.

Enter CHRISTIERN, ATTENDANTS, *&c.* PETERSON *meets him.*

Christ. What from Dalecarlia?
Peter. Late last night,
I sent a trusty slave,
And hourly wait some tidings.
Christ. Sure
The wretches will not dare such quick perdition.
I cannot think it.
Peter. I think they will not—Tho' of old I know them,
All born to broils, the very sons of tumult;
Waste is their wealth, and mutiny their birthright,
And this the yearly fever of their blood,
Their holiday of war; a day apart,
Torn out from peace, and sacred to rebellion.
Oft has their battle hung upon the brow

Of yon wild steep, a living cloud of mischiefs,
Pregnant with plagues, and empty'd on the heads
Of many a monarch.

Enter ARVIDA, *guarded, and a* GENTLEMAN.

Arv. Now, fate, I'm caught, and what remains is obvious.
Gent. A prisoner, good my lord.
Christ. When taken?
Gent. Now, ev'n here, before your tent;
I mark'd his careless action, but his eye
Of studied observation—then his port
And base attire ill suiting—I inquir'd,
But found he was a stranger.
Christ. A sullen scorn
Knits up his brow, and frowns upon our presence.
What—ay—thou wou'dst be thought a mystery,
Some greatness in eclipse—Whence art thou, slave?
Silent! Nay, then—Bring forth the torture!
A smile! damnation!—How the wretch assumes
The wreck of state, the suff'ring soul of majesty!
What, have we no preeminence, no claim?
Dost thou not know thy life is in our pow'r?
Arv. 'Tis therefore I despise it.
Christ. Matchless insolence!
What art thou? speak!
Arv. Be sure no friend to thee;
For I'm a foe to tyrants.
Christ. Fiends and fire!—
A whirlwind tear thee, most audacious traitor.
Arv. Do rage and chafe, thy wrath's beneath me, Christiern.
How poor thy pow'r, how empty is thy happiness,
When such a wretch, as I appear to be,
Can ride thy temper, harrow up thy form,
And stretch thy soul upon the rack of passion!

Christ. I will know thee!—Bear him hence!
Why, what are kings, if slaves can brave us thus?
Go, Peterson, hold him to the rack—Tear, search him,
Sting him deep.——

[*Exit* PETERSON *with* ARVIDA, *guarded.*

Enter a MESSENGER.

What wou'dst thou, fellow?

Mess. O, my sovereign lord,
I am come fast and far, from ev'n 'till morn,
Five times I've cross'd the shade of sleepless night,
Impatient of thy presence.

Christ. Whence?

Mess. From Denmark.
Commended from the consort of thy throne
To speed and privacy.

Christ. Your words would taste of terror—

Mess. A secret malady, my gracious liege,
Some factious vapour, rising from off the skirts
Of southmost Norway, has diffus'd its bane,
And rages now within the heart of Denmark.

Christ. It must not, cannot, 'tis impossible!
What, my own Danes!

Enter PETERSON, *who kneels, and gives a Letter.*
CHRISTIERN *reads it.*

Christ. Gustavus!
So near us, and in arms!
What's to be done? Now, Peterson, now's the time;
Waken all the wond'rous statesman in thee.
This curs'd Gustavus
Invades my shrinking spirits, awes my heart,
And sits upon my slumbers—All in vain
Has he been daring, and have I been vigilant;
He still evades the hunter,
And if there's pow'r in heav'n or hell, it guards him.

His name's a host, a terror to my legions.
And by my triple crown, I swear, Gustavus,
I'd rather meet all Europe for my foe,
Than see thy face in arms!
Peter. Be calm, my liege,
And listen to a secret big with consequence,
That gives thee back the second man on earth
Whose valour could plant fears around thy throne:
Thy pris'ner——
Christ. What of him?
Peter. The Prince Arvida.
Christ. How!
Peter. The same.
Christ. My royal fugitive!
Peter. Most certain.
Christ. Now, then, 'tis plain who sent him hither.
Peter. Yes.
Pray give me leave, my lord—a thought comes cross me—
If so, he must be ours— [*Pauses.*
Your pardon for a question—Has Arvida
E'er seen your beauteous daughter, your Christina?
Christ. Never—yes—possibly he might, that day
When the proud pair, Gustavus and Arvida,
Thro' Copenhagen drew a length of chain,
And grac'd my chariot wheels.——But why the question?
Peter. I'll tell you—While e'en now he stood before us,
I mark'd his high demeanour, and my eye
Claim'd some remembrance of him, tho' in clouds
Doubtful and distant, but a nearer view
Renew'd the characters effac'd by absence.
Yet, least he might presume upon a friendship
Of ancient league between us, I dissembled,
Nor seem'd to know him.—On he proudly strode,
As who should say, back fortune, know thy distance!

Thus steadily he pass'd, and mock'd his fate.
When, lo! the princess to her morning walk
Came forth attended—Quick amazement seiz'd
Arvida at the sight; his steps took root,
A tremor shook him; and his alter'd cheek
Now sudden flush'd, then fled its wonted colour,
While with an eager and intemp'rate look,
He bent his form, and hung upon her beauties.
Christ. Ha! did our daughter note him?
Peter. No, my lord;
She pass'd regardless—Straight his pride fell from him,
And at her name he started.
Then heav'd a sigh, and cast a look to Heav'n,
Of such a mute, yet eloquent emotion,
As seem'd to say—Now, Fate, thou hast prevail'd,
And found one way to triumph o'er Arvida!
Christ. But whither would this lead?
Peter. To this, my lord——
While thus his soul's unseated, shook by passion,
Could we engage him to betray Gustavus—
Christ. O empty hope! Impossible!
Do I not know him, and the curs'd Gustavus?
Both fix'd in resolution deep as hell.
Peter. Ah, my liege,
No mortal footing treads so firm in virtue,
As always to abide the slipp'ry path,
Nor deviate with the biass—Some have few,
But each man has his failing, some defect,
Wherein to slide temptation—Leave him to me.
Christ. If thou canst bend this proud one to our purpose,
And make the lion crouch, 'tis well—if not,
Away at once, and sweep him from remembrance.
Peter. Then I must promise deep.
Christ. Ay, any thing; outbid ambition.
Peter. Love?—
Christ. Ha! Yes—our daughter too—if she can bribe him:

But then to win him to betray his friend!

Peter. Oh, doubt it not, my lord—for if he loves,
As sure he greatly does, I have a stratagem
That holds the certainty of fate within it.
Love is a passion, whose effects are various.
It ever brings some change upon the soul,
Some virtue, or some vice, 'till then unknown,
Degrades the hero, and makes cowards valiant.

Christ. True; when it pours upon a youthful temper,
Open and apt to take the torrent in,
It owns no limits, no restraint it knows,
But sweeps all down, tho' Heav'n and Hell oppose.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Prison.

ARVIDA *discovered in Chains;* GUARDS *preparing Instruments of Death and Torture.—He advances in Confusion.*

Arv. Off, off, vain cumbrance, ye conflicting thoughts!
Leave me to Heav'n.—O peace!—It will not be—
Just when I rose above mortality,
To pour her wond'rous weight of charms upon me!
At such a time, it was—it was too much!—
For ev'ry pang these tortur'd limbs shall feel,
Descend in tenfold blessings on Gustavus!
Yes, bless him, bless him! Crown his hours with joy
His head with glory, and his arms with conquest;
Set his firm foot upon the neck of tyrants,
And be his name the balm of every lip,

That breathes thro' Sweden! Worthiest to be styl'd
Their friend, their chief, their father, and their king!

Enter PETERSON.

Peter. Unbind your prisoner.
Arv. How!
Peter. You have your liberty,
And may depart unquestion'd.
Arv. Do not mock me.
It is not to be thought, while power remains,
That Christiern wants a reason to be cruel.
But let him know, I wou'd not be oblig'd.
He, who accepts the favours of a tyrant,
Shares in his guilt; they leave a stain behind them.
Peter. You wrong the native temper of his soul;
Cruel of force, but never of election:
Prudence compell'd him to a show of tyranny;
Howe'er, those politics are now no more,
And mercy in her turn shall shine on Sweden.
Arv. Indeed! it were a strange, a bless'd reverse,
Devoutly to be wish'd; but then, the cause,
The cause, my lord, must surely be uncommon.
May I presume?——
Perhaps a secret?
Peter. No——or, if it were,
The boldness of thy spirit claims respect,
And should be answer'd.—Know, the only man,
In whom our monarch ever knew repulse,
Is now our friend; that terror of the field,
Th' invincible Gustavus.
Arv. Ha! Friend to Christiern?—Guard thyself, my heart! [*Aside.*
Nor seem to take alarm.—Why, good my lord,
What terror is there in a wretch proscrib'd,
Naked of means, and distant as Gustavus?
Peter. There you mistake—Nor knew we till this hour,

The danger was so near.——From yonder hill
He sends proposals, back'd with all the pow'rs
Of Dalecarlia, those licentious resolutes,
Who, having nought to hazard in the wreck,
Are ever foremost to foment a storm.
Arv. I were too bold to question on the terms.
Peter. No—trust me, valiant man, whoe'er thou art,
I would do much to win a worth like thine,
By any act of service, or of confidence.—
The terms Gustavus claims, indeed, are haughty;
The freedom of his mother, and his sister,
His forfeit province, Gothland, and the isles
Submitted to his sceptre——But the league,
The bond of amity, and lasting friendship,
Is, that he claims Christina for his bride.—
You start, and seem surpris'd.
Arv. A sudden pain
Just struck athwart my breast.—But say, my lord,
I thought you nam'd Christina.
Peter. Yes.
Arv. O torture! [*Aside.*
What of her, my good lord?
Peter. I said, Gustavus claim'd her for his bride.
Arv. His bride! his wife!
You did not mean his wife?—Do fiends feel this?
[*Aside.*
Down, heart, nor tell thy anguish!—Pray excuse me,
Did you not say, the princess was his wife?
Whose wife, my lord?
Peter. I did not say what was, but what must be.
Arv. Touching Gustavus, was it not?
Peter. The same.
Arv. His bride!
Peter. I say his bride, his wife; his lov'd Christina!
Christina, fancied in the very prime
And youthful smile of nature; form'd for joys
Unknown to mortals. You seem indispos'd.

Arv. The crime of constitution—Oh Gustavus!
[*Aside.*
This is too much!—And think you then, my lord—
What, will the royal Christiern e'er consent
To match his daughter with his deadliest foe?
Peter. What should he do? War else must be eternal.
Besides, some rumours from his Danish realms
Make peace essential here.
Arv. Yes, peace has sweets,
That Hybla never knew; it sleeps on down,
Cull'd gently from beneath the cherub's wings;
No bed for mortals—Man is warfare—All
A hurricane within; yet friendship stoops,
And gilds the gloom with falsehood——Undone! undone, Arvida!——
Peter. Is't possible, my lord! the Prince Arvida!
My friend! [*Embraces him.*
Arv. Confusion to the name! [*Turns.*
Peter. Why this, good Heav'n? And wherefore thus disguis'd?
Arv. Yes, that accomplish'd traitor, that Gustavus;
While he sat planning private scenes of happiness,
Oh well dissembled! He, he sent me hither;
My friendly, unsuspecting heart a sacrifice,
To make death sure, and rid him of a rival.
Peter. A rival! Do you then love Christiern's daughter?
Arv. Name her not, Peterson; since she can't be mine:
Gustavus! how, ah! how hast thou deceiv'd me!
Who could have look'd for falsehood from thy brow?
Whose heav'nly arch was as the throne of virtue,
Thy eye appear'd a sun, to cheer the world,
Thy bosom truth's fair palace, and thy arms,
Benevolent, the harbour for mankind.
Peter. What's to be done? Believe me, valiant Prince,

I know not which most sways me to thy int'rests,
My love to thee, or hatred to Gustavus.
Arv. Would you then save me?. Think, contrive it quickly!
Lend me your troops———by all the pow'rs of vengeance,
Myself will face this terror of the North,
This son of fame—this—O, Gustavus—What?
Where had I wander'd?—Stab my bleeding country!
Save, shield me from that thought!
Peter. Retire, my lord;
For, see, the Princess comes!
Arv. Where, where?
Ha! Yes, she comes indeed! her beauties drive
Time, place, and truth, and circumstance before them!
Perdition pleases there—pull—tear me from her!
Yet must I gaze—but one—but one look more,
And I were lost for ever. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

An Apartment in CHRISTIERN'S *Palace.*

Enter CHRISTINA *and* MARIANA.

Christina. Forbid it, shame! Forbid it virgin modesty!
No, no, my friend, Gustavus ne'er shall know it.
O I am over-paid with conscious pleasure;
The sense but to have sav'd that wond'rous man,
Is still a smiling cherub in my breast,
And whispers peace within.
Mar. 'Tis strange, a man, of his high note and consequence,
Should so evade the busy search of thousands;

That six long months have shut him from inquiry,
And not an eye can trace him to his covert.
Christina. Once 'twas not so, each infant lisp'd, Gustavus!
It was the fav'rite name of ev'ry language,
His slightest motions fill'd the world with tidings;
Wak'd he, or slept, fame watch'd th' important hour,
And nations told it round.
Mar. Madam, I've heard, that when
Gustavus lay detain'd in Denmark,
Your royal father sought the hero's friendship,
And offer'd ample terms of peace and amity.
Christina. He did; he offer'd that, my Mariana,
For which contending monarchs su'd in vain;
He offer'd me, his darling, his Christina;
But I was slighted, slighted by a captive,
Tho' kingdoms swell'd my dower.
Mar. Amazement fix me!
Rejected by Gustavus!
Christina. Yes, Mariana;——but rejected nobly.
Not worlds could win him to betray his country!
Had he consented, I had then despis'd him.
What's all the gaudy glitter of a crown?
What, but the glaring meteor of ambition,
That leads a wretch benighted in his errors,
Points to the gulf, and shines upon destruction.
Mar. You wrong your charms, whose pow'r might reconcile
Things opposite in Nature——Had he seen you?—
Christina. I'll tell thee——Yet while inexpert of years,
I heard of bloody spoils, the waste of war,
And dire conflicting man; Gustavus' name
Superior rose, still dreadful in the tale:
Then first he seiz'd my infancy of soul,
As somewhat fabled of gigantic fierceness,
Too huge for any form; he scar'd my sleep,

And fill'd my young idea. Not the boast
Of all his virtues (graces only known
To him, and heav'nly natures!) could erase
The strong impression, 'till that wond'rous day
In which he met my eyes.
What then was my amazement! he was chain'd,
Was chain'd! Like the robes
Of coronation, worn by youthful kings,
He drew his shackles. The Herculean nerve
Brac'd his young arm; and soften'd in his cheek
Liv'd more than woman's sweetness! Then his eye!
His mien! his native dignity! He look'd,
As tho' he led captivity in chains,
And we were slaves around.

Mar. Did he observe you?

Christina. He did: for, as I trembled, look'd and sigh'd,
His eyes met mine; he fix'd their glories on me.
Confusion thrill'd me then, and secret joy,
Fast throbbing, stole its treasures from my heart,
And, mantling upward, turn'd my face to crimson.
I wish'd—but did not dare to look—he gaz'd;
When sudden, as by force, he turn'd away,
And would no more behold me.

Enter LAERTES.

Laer. Ah, bright imperial maid! my royal mistress!

Christina. What wou'dst thou say? Thy looks speak terror to me.

Laer. Oh, you are ruin'd, sacrific'd, undone!
I heard it all; your cruel, cruel father,
Has sold you, giv'n you up a spoil to treason,
The purchase of the noblest blood on earth——
Gustavus!

Christina. Ah! What of him? Where, where is he?

Laer. In Dalecarlia, on some great design,
Doom'd in an hour to fall by faithless hands:
His friend, the brave, the false, deceiv'd Arvida,
Ev'n now prepares to lead a band of ruffians
Beneath the winding covert of the hill,
And seize Gustavus, obvious to the snares
Of friendship's fair dissemblance. And your father
Has vow'd your beauties to Arvida's arms,
The purchase of his falsehood.

Christina. Shield me, Heav'n!
Is there no lett, no means of quick prevention?

Laer. Behold my life, still chain'd to thy direction,
My will shall have a wing for ev'ry word,
That breathes thy mandate.

Christina. Will you, good Laertes?
Alas! I fear to overtask thy friendship.
Say, will you save me then—Oh go, haste, fly!
Acquaint Gustavus——if, if he must fall,
Let hosts that hem this single lion in,
Let nations hunt him down——let him fall nobly.

Laer. I go, and Heav'n direct me to him! [*Exit.*

Christina. Ye pow'rs! if deaf to all the vows I make,
Yet shield Gustavus, for Gustavus' sake;
Protect his virtues from a faithless foe,
And save your only image left below. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

Mountains of DALECARLIA.

Enter GUSTAVUS *as a Peasant;* SIVARD *and* DALECARLIANS *following.*

Gust. Ye men of Sweden, wherefore are ye come?
See ye not yonder, how the locusts swarm,
To drink the fountains of your honour up,
And leave your hills a desert—Wretched men!
Why came ye forth? Is this a time for sport?
Or are ye met with song and jovial feast,
To welcome your new guests, your Danish visitants?
To stretch your supple necks beneath their feet,
And fawning lick the dust?—Go, go, my countrymen,
Each to your several mansions, trim them out,
Cull all the tedious earnings of your toil,
To purchase bondage—Bid your blooming daughters,
And your chaste wives, to spread their beds with softness;
Then go ye forth, and with your proper hands
Conduct your masters in; conduct the sons
Of lust and violation——O, Swedes! Swedes!
Heav'ns! are ye men, and will ye suffer this?
There was a time, my friends, a glorious time!
When, had a single man of your forefathers
Upon the frontier met a host in arms,
His courage scarce had turn'd; himself had stood,
Alone, had stood the bulwark of his country.

Come, come ye on then: Here I take my stand!
Here on the brink, the very verge of liberty;
Although contention rise upon the clouds,
Mix heav'n with earth, and roll the ruin onward;
Here will I fix, and breast me to the shock,
Till I, or Denmark fall.

Siv. And who art thou,
That thus wou'dst swallow all the glory up,
That should redeem the times? Behold this breast,
The sword has till'd it; and the stripes of slaves
Shall ne'er trace honour here; shall never blot
The fair inscription——Never shall the cords
Of Danish insolence bind down these arms,
That bore my royal master from the field.

Gust. Ha! Say you, brother? Were you there—
Oh, grief!
Where liberty and Stenon fell together?

Siv. Yes, I was there——A bloody field it was,
Where Conquest gasp'd, and wanted breath to tell
Its o'er-toil'd triumph. There our bleeding king,
There Stenon on this bosom made his bed,
And rolling back his dying eyes upon me;
Soldier, he cried, if e'er it be thy lot
To see my valiant cousin, great Gustavus,
Tell him—for once, that I have fought like him,
And would like him have——
Conquer'd.

Gust. Oh, Danes! Danes!
You shall weep blood for this. Shall they not, brother?
Yes, we will deal our might with thrifty vengeance,
A life for ev'ry blow, and, when we fall,
There shall be weight in't; like the tott'ring tow'rs,
That draw contiguous ruin.

Siv. Brave, brave man!
My soul admires thee——By my father's spirit,
I would not barter such a death as this
For immortality! Nor we alone——

Here be the trusty gleanings of that field,
Where last we fought for freedom; here's rich poverty,
Tho' wrapp'd in rags, my fifty brave companions;
Who thro' the force of fifteen thousand foes
Bore off their king, and sav'd his great remains.
Gust. Why, Captain,
We could but die alone, with these we'll conquer.
My fellow lab'rers too——What say ye, friends?
Shall we not strike for't?
Siv. Death! Victory or death!
All. No bonds! no bonds!
Arn. Spoke like yourselves—Ye men of Dalecarlia,
Brave men and bold! Whom ev'ry future age
Shall mark for wond'rous deeds, achievements won
From honour's dang'rous summit, warriors all!
Say, might ye chuse a chief—
Speak, name the man,
Who then should meet your wish?
Siv. Forbear the theme.
Why wou'dst thou seek to sink us with the weight
Of grievous recollection? Oh, Gustavus!
Could the dead wake, thou wert the man.
Gust. Didst thou know Gustavus?
Siv. Know him! Oh, Heav'n! what else, who else was worth
The knowledge of a soldier? That great day,
When Christiern, in his third attempt on Sweden,
Had summ'd his pow'rs, and weigh'd the scale of fight:
On the bold brink, the very push of conquest,
Gustavus rush'd, and bore the battle down;
In his full sway of prowess, like Leviathan
That scoops his foaming progress on the main,
And drives the shoals along—forward I sprung,
All emulous, and lab'ring to attend him;
Fear fled before, behind him rout grew loud,

And distant wonder gaz'd—At length he turn'd,
And having ey'd me with a wond'rous look
Of sweetness mix'd with glory—Grace inestimable!
He pluck'd this bracelet from his conqu'ring arm,
And bound it here—My wrist seem'd treble nerv'd;
My heart spoke to him, and I did such deeds
As best might thank him—But from that bless'd day
I never saw him more—yet still to this,
I bow, as to the relics of my saint:
Each morn I drop a tear on ev'ry bead,
Count all the glories of Gustavus o'er,
And think I still behold him.

Gust. Rightly thought;
For so thou dost, my soldier.
Behold your general,
Gustavus! come once more to lead you on
To laurel'd victory, to fame, to freedom!

Siv. Strike me, ye pow'rs!—It is illusion all!
It cannot——It is, it is!
[*Falls and embraces his Knees.*

Gust. Oh, speechless eloquence!
Rise to my arms, my friend.

Siv. Friend! said you friend?
O, my heart's lord! my conqueror! my——

Gust. Approach, my fellow soldiers, your Gustavus
Claims no precedence here.
Haste, brave men!
Collect your friends, to join us on the instant;
Summon our brethren to their share of conquest,
And let loud echo, from her circling hills,
Sound freedom, till the undulation shake
The bounds of utmost Sweden.
[*Exeunt* DALECARLIANS, *shouting.*

Enter LAERTES.

Laer. Thy presence nobly speaks the man I wish,
Gustavus.

Gust. Thou hast a hostile garb;
Ha! say—art thou Laertes? If I err not,
There is a friendly semblance in that face,
Which answers to a fond impression here,
And tells me I'm thy debtor——

Laer. No, valiant prince, you over-rate my service,
There is a worthier object of your gratitude,
Whom yet you know not—Oh, I have to tell—
But then, to gain your credit, must unfold
What haply should be secret——Be it so;
You are all honour.

Gust. Let me to thy mind,
For thou hast wak'd my soul into a thought
That holds me all attention.

Laer. Mightiest man!
To me alone you held yourself oblig'd
For life and liberty——Had it been so,
I were most bless'd with retribution just
To pay thee for my own——For on the day
When by your arm the mighty Thraces fell,
Fate threw me to your sword—You spar'd my youth
And, in the very whirl and rage of fight,
Your eye was taught compassion—from that hour
I vow'd my life the slave of your rememb'rance;
And often, as Christina, heav'nly maid!
The mistress of my service, question'd me
Of wars and vent'rous deeds, my tidings came
Still freighted with thy name, until the day
In which yourself appear'd, to make praise speech less.
Christina saw you then, and on your fate
Dropp'd a kind tear; and when your noble scorn
Of proffer'd terms provok'd her father's rage
To take the deadly forfeit; she, she only,
Whose virtues watch'd the precious hour of mercy,
All trembling, sent my secret hand to save you;
Where, through a pass unknown to all your keeper
I led you forth and gave you to your liberty.

Gust. Oh, I am sunk, o'erwhelm'd with wond'rous goodness!
But were I rich and free as open mines,
That teem their golden wealth upon the world,
Still I were poor, unequal to her bounty.
Nor can I longer doubt whose gen'rous arm
In my Arvida, in my friend's deliverance,
Gave double life, and freedom to Gustavus.
Laer. A fatal present! Ah, you know him not;
Arvida is misled, undone by passion;
False to your friendship, to your trust unfaithful.
Gust. Ha! hold!
Laer. I must unfold it.
Gust. Yet forbear:
This way—I hear some footing—pray you, soft—
If thou hast aught to urge against Arvida,
The man of virtue, tell it not the wind;
Lest slander catch the sound, and guilt should triumph. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Mountains of Dalecarlia.

Enter ARVIDA, *speaking to a* MESSENGER.

Arv. He's here——bear back my orders to your fellows,
That not a man, on peril of his life,
Advance in sight 'till call'd.
Mess. My lord, I will. [*Exit.*
Arv. Have I not vow'd it, faithless as he is,
Have I not vow'd his fall? Yet, good Heav'n!
Why start these sudden tears? On, on I must,
For I am half way down the dizzy steep,
Where my brain turns—A draught of Lethe now—
Oh, that the world would sleep—to wake no more!
Or that the name of friendship bore no charm

To make my nerve unsteady, and this steel
Fly backward from its task! it shall be done.—
Empire! Christina! tho' th' affrighted sun
Start back with horror of the direful stroke,
It shall be done. Ha! he comes!
How steadily he looks, as Heav'n's own book,
The leaf of truth, were open'd on his aspect!
Up, up, dark minister——his fate calls out
[*Puts up the Dagger.*
To nobler execution; for he comes
In opposition, singly, man to man,
As tho' he brav'd my wish.

Enter GUSTAVUS.

[*They look for some Time on each other;* ARVIDA *lays his Hand on his Sword, and withdraws it by Turns; then advances irresolutely.*

Gust. Is it then so?
Arv. Defend thyself.
Gust. No——strike——
I would unfold my bosom to thy sword,
But that I know, the wound you give this breast
Would doubly pierce thy own.
Arv. I know thee not——
It is the time's eclipse, and what should be
In nature, now is nameless.
Gust. Ah, my brother!
Arv. What would'st thou?
Gust. Is it thus we two should meet?
Arv. Art thou not false? Deep else, Oh, deep indeed,
Were my damnation.
Gust. Dear, unhappy man!
My heart bleeds for thee. False I'd surely been,
Had I like thee been tempted.

Arv. Ha! Speak, speak,
Didst thou not send to treat with Christiern?
Gust. Never.
I know thy error, but I know the arts,
The frauds, the wiles, that practis'd on thy virtue;
Firm how you stood, and tow'r'd above mortality;
Till in the fond unguarded hour of love,
The wily undermining tempter came,
And won thee from thyself—a moment won thee—
For still thou art Arvida, still the man
On whom thy country calls for her deliv'rance.
Already are her bravest sons in arms, [*Shout.*
Mark how they shout, impatient of our presence,
To lead them on to a new life of liberty,
To name, to conquest—Ha! Heav'n guard my brother!
Thy cheek turns pale, thy eye looks wild upon me;
Wilt thou not answer me?
Arv. Gustavus!
Gust. Speak.
Arv. Have I not dream'd?
Gust. No other I esteem it.
Where lives the man, whose reason slumbers not?
Still pure, still blameless, if, at wonted dawn,
Again he wakes to virtue.
Arv. Oh, my dawn
Must soon be dark. Confusion dissipates,
To leave me worse confounded.
Gust. Think no more on't.
Come to my arms, thou dearest of mankind!
Arv. Stand off! Pollution dwells within my touch,
And horror hangs around me—Cruel man!
Oh, thou hast doubly damn'd me with this goodness;
For resolution held the deed as done;
That now must sink me—Hark! I'm summon'd hence,
My audit opens! Poise me! for I stand
Upon a spire, against whose sightless base

Hell breaks his wave beneath. Down, down I dare not,
And up I cannot look, for justice fronts me.—
Thou shalt have vengeance, tho' my purpling blood
Were nectar for Heav'n's bowl, as warm and rich,
As now 'tis base, it thus should pour for pardon.

[GUSTAVUS *catches his Arm, and in the Struggle the Dagger falls.*

Gust. Ha! hold, Arvida——No, I will not lose thee——
Forbid it Heav'n! thou shalt not rob me so;
No, I will struggle with thee to the last,
And save thee from thyself. Oh, answer me!
Wilt thou forsake me? Answer me, my brother.

Arv. Expose me, cage me, brand me for the tool
Of crafted villains, for the veriest slave,
On whom the bend of each contemptuous brow
Shall look with loathing. Ah, my turpitude
Shall be the vile comparative of knaves
To boast and whiten by!

Gust. Not so, not so.
He, who knows no fault, knows no perfection.
The rectitude, that Heav'n appoints to man,
Leads on through error; and the kindly sense
Of having stray'd, endears the road to bliss;
It makes Heav'n's way more pleasing! O my brother,
'Tis hence a thousand cordial charities
Derive their growth, their vigour, and their sweetness.
This short lapse
Shall to thy future foot give cautious treading,
Erect and firm in virtue.

Arv. Give me leave. [*Offers to pass.*

Gust. You shall not pass.

Arv. I must.

Gust. Whither?

Arv. I know not——O Gustavus!

Gust. Speak.

Arv. You can't forgive me.
Gust. Not forgive thee!
Arv. No.
Look there. [*Points to the Dagger.*
And yet, when I resolv'd to kill thee
I could have died—indeed I could—for thee,
I could have died, Gustavus!
Gust. Oh, I know it.
A gen'rous mind, though sway'd a while by passion,
Is like the steely vigour of the bow,
Still holds its native rectitude, and bends
But to recoil more forceful. Come, forget it.

Enter SIVARD.

Siv. My lord, as now I pass'd the mountain's brow,
I spy'd some men, whose arms, and strange attire,
Give cause for circumspection.
Gust. Danes, perhaps;
Haste, intercept their passage to the camp.
[*Exit* SIVARD.
Arv. Those are the Danes, that witness to my shame.
Gust. Perish th' opprobrious term! not so, Arvida;
Myself will be the guardian of thy fame;
Trust me, I will—But see, our friends approach—Oh, clear,
While I attend them, clear that cloud, my brother,
That sits upon the morning of thy youth.

Enter ANDERSON, ARNOLDUS, SIVARD, OFFICERS, &c.

And. Let us all see him!
Gust. Amazement, I perceive, hath fill'd your hearts,
And joy for that your lost Gustavus, 'scap'd
Through wounds, imprisonments, and chains, and deaths,

Thus sudden, thus unlook'd for, stands before ye,
As one escap'd from cruel hands I come,
From hearts that ne'er knew pity;
And know no music but the groans of Sweden.
Yet, not for that my sister's early innocence,
And mother's age now grind beneath captivity;
Nor that one bloody, one remorseless hour
Swept my great sire, and kindred from my side;
For them Gustavus weeps not;
But, O great parent, when I think on thee!
Thy numberless, thy nameless, shameful infamies,
My widow'd country! Sweden! when I think
Upon thy desolation, spite of rage——
And vengeance that would choke them—tears will flow.

And. Oh, they are villains, ev'ry Dane of them,
Practis'd to stab and smile; to stab the babe,
That smiles upon them.

Arn. What accursed hours
Roll o'er those wretches, who, to fiends like these,
In their dear liberty have barter'd more
Than worlds will rate for?

Gust. O liberty, Heav'n's choice prerogative!
True bond of law, thou social soul of property,
Thou breath of reason, life of life itself!
For thee the valiant bleed. O sacred liberty!
Wing'd from the summer's snare, from flatt'ring ruin,
Like the bold stork you seek the wint'ry shore,
Leave courts, and pomps, and palaces to slaves,
Cleave to the cold, and rest upon the storm.
Upborn by thee, my soul disdain'd the terms
Of empire——are ye not at the hands of tyrants?
Are ye not mark'd, ye men of Dalecarlia,
Are ye not mark'd by all the circling world
As the last stake; what but liberty,
Through the fam'd course of thirteen hundred years,
Aloof hath held invasion from your hills,
And sanctify'd their shade?—And will ye, will ye

Shrink from the hopes of the expecting world;
Bid your high honours stoop to foreign insult,
And in one hour give up to infamy
The harvest of a thousand years of glory?
And. Die all first!
Gust. Yes, die by piecemeal!
Leave not a limb o'er which a Dane may triumph!
Now from my soul I joy, I joy, my friends,
To see ye fear'd; to see, that ev'n your foes
Do justice to your valours!—There they be,
The pow'rs of kingdoms, summ'd in yonder host,
Yet kept aloof, yet trembling to assail ye.
And, Oh, when I look round and see you here,
Of number short, but prevalent in virtue,
My heart swells high, and burns for the encounter.
True courage but from opposition grows;
And what are fifty, what a thousand slaves,
Match'd to the sinew of a single arm
That strikes for liberty? that strikes to save
His fields from fire, his infants from the sword,
His couch from lust, his daughters from pollution;
And his large honours from eternal infamy?
What doubt we then? Shall we, shall we stand here!
Let us on!
Oh, yes, I read your lovely fierce impatience!
You shall not be withheld; we will rush on them—
This is indeed to triumph.
And. On, lead us on, Gustavus; one word more
Is but delay of conquest.
Gust. Take your wish.
He, who wants arms, may grapple with the foe,
And so be furnish'd. You, most noble Anderson,
Divide our pow'rs, and with the fam'd Olaus
Take the left route—You, Eric, great in arms!
With the renown'd Nederbi, hold the right,
And skirt the forest down; then wheel at once,
Confess'd to view, and close upon the vale:
Myself, and my most valiant cousin here

Th' invincible Arvida, gallant Sivard,
Arnoldus, and these hundred hardy vet'rans,
Will pour directly on, and lead the onset.
Bold are our hearts, and nervous are our hands.
With us, truth, justice, fame, and freedom close,
Each, singly equal to an host of foes.

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The Palace.

Enter CHRISTIERN, CHRISTINA, MARIANA, *and* PETERSON.

Christina. I heard, it was your royal pleasure, sir,
I should attend your highness.
Christ. Yes, Christina,
But business interferes.
[*Exeunt* CHRISTINA *and* MARIANA.

Enter an OFFICER.

Off. My sovereign liege,
Wide o'er the western shelving of yon hill,
We think, though indistinctly, we can spy,
Like men in motion must'ring on the heath;
And there is one, who saith he can discern
A few of martial gesture, and bright arms,
Who this way bend their action.
Christ. Friends, perhaps,
For foes it were too daring—Haste thee, Peterson,

Detach a thousand of our Danish horse
To rule their motions—we will out ourself,
And hold our pow'rs in readiness—Lead on.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment in the Palace.

Enter CHRISTINA *and* MARIANA.

Mar. Ha! did you mark, my princess, did you mark?
Shou'd some reverse, some wond'rous whirl of fate
Once more return Gustavus to the battle,
New nerve his arm, and wreathe his brow with conquest;
Say, would you not repent that e'er you sav'd
This dreadful man, the foe of your great race;
Who pours impetuous in his country's cause
To spoil you of a kingdom?

Christina. No, my friend.
Had I to death, or bondage, sold my sire,
Or had Gustavus on our native realms
Made hostile inroad; then, my Mariana,
Had I then sav'd him from the stroke of justice,
I should not cease my suit to Heav'n for pardon.
But if, though in a foe, to reverence virtue,
Withstand oppression, rescue injur'd innocence,
Step boldly in betwixt my sire and guilt,
And save my king, my father, from dishonour;
If this be sin, I have shook hands with penitence.
First perish crowns, dominion, all the shine
And transcience of this world, ere guilt shall serve
To buy the vain incumbrance.
Blasted be that royalty,
Which murder must make sure, and crimes inglorious!
The bulk of kingdoms, nay, the world is light,
When guilt weighs opposite—Oh, wou'd to Heav'n,

The loss of empire wou'd restore his innocence,
Restore the fortunes, and the precious lives
Of thousands fall'n the victims of ambition!

Enter LAERTES.

Does he live?

Laer. He does,
But death, ere night, must fill a long account;
The camp, the country's in confusion: war,
And changes ride upon the hour that hastes
To intercept my tongue—I else could tell
Of virtues hitherto beyond my ken;
Courage, to which the lion stoops his crest,
Yet grafted upon qualities as soft
As a rock'd infant's meekness; such as tempts
Against my faith, my country, and allegiance,
To wish thee speed, Gustavus.

Christina. Then you found him!

Laer. I did: and warn'd him, but in vain; for death
To him appear'd more grateful than to find
His friend's dishonour.

Christina. Give me the manner—quick—soft, good Laertes!

Enter CHRISTIERN, PETERSON, DANES, *&c.*

Christ. Damn'd! double traitor! O curs'd, false Arvida!
Guard well the Swedish pris'ners,
Stand to your arms—Bring forth the captives there!

Enter AUGUSTA *and* GUSTAVA *guarded.*

Pet. My liege——

Christ. Away!
Fortune! we will not trust the changeling more;
But wear her girt upon our armed loins,
Or pointed in our grasp.

Enter an OFFICER.

Off. The foe's at hand.
With gallant show your thousand Danes rode forth,
But shall return no more!—I mark'd the action,
A band of desp'rate resolutes rush'd on them,
Scarce numb'ring to a tenth, and in midway
They clos'd; the shock was dreadful, nor your Danes
Could bear the madding charge; a while they stood;
Then shrunk, and broke, and turn'd—When, lo, behind,
Fast wheeling from the right and left, there pour'd,
Who intercepted their return, and caught
Within the toil they perish'd.
Christ. 'Tis Gustavus!
No mortal else, not Ammon's boasted son,
Not Cæsar would have dar'd it. Tell me, say,
What numbers in the whole may they amount to?
Off. About five thousand.
Christ. And no more?
Off. No more,
That yet appear.
Christ. We count six times their sum.——
Haste, soldier, take a trumpet, tell Gustavus
We have of terms to offer, and would treat
Touching his mother's ransom; say, her death,
Suspended by our grace, but waits his answer.
[*Exit* OFFICER.
Madam, it should well suit with your authority,
[*To* AUGUSTA.
To check this frenzy in your son——Look to it,
Or, by the saints, this hour's your last of life!
Aug. Come, my Gustava, come, my little captive,
We shall be free;
And I will give thee to thy father's fondness,
And to the arms of all thy royal race
In Heav'n; who sit on thrones, with loves and joys.

Christ. Is this my answer?
Come forth, ye ministers of death, come forth.

Enter RUFFIANS, *who seize* AUGUSTA *and* GUSTAVA.

Pluck them asunder! We shall prove you, lady!
Christina. Ah! I can hold no longer. Royal sir,
Thus on my knees, and lower, lower still——
Christ. My child! what mean you?
Christina. O my gracious father!
Kill, kill me rather—let me perish first;
But do not stain the sanctity of kings
With the sweet blood of helpless innocence.
Augusta. Ha! who art thou,
That look'st so like the 'habitants of heav'n,
Like mercy sent upon the morning's blush,
To glad the heart, and cheer a gloomy world
With light 'till now unknown?
Christ. Away, they come.
I'll hear no more of your ill-tim'd petitions.
Christina. Oh yet for pity!
Christ. I will none on't, leave me.
Pity! it is the infant fool of nature:
Tear off her hold, and bear her to her tent.
[*Exeunt* CHRISTINA, MARIANA, LAERTES, *and* ATTENDANTS.

Enter an OFFICER.

Off. My liege, Gustavus, though with much reluctance,
Consents to one hour's truce. His soldiers rest
Upon their arms, and follow'd by a few,
He comes to know your terms.
Christ. I see.
Be ready, slaves, and, on the word,
Plunge deep your daggers in their bosoms.
[Points to AUGUSTA.

Enter GUSTAVUS, ARVIDA, ANDERSON, ARNOLDUS, SIVARD, *&c.*

Hold!

Gust. Ha! 'tis, it is my mother!

Christ. Tell me, Gustavus, tell me why is this?
That, as a stream diverted from the banks
Of smooth obedience, thou hast drawn those men
Upon a dry unchannell'd enterprize,
To turn their inundation?—Are the lives
Of my misguided people held so light,
That thus thou'dst push them on the keen rebuke
Of guarded majesty.
Look round, unruly boy, thy battle comes
Like raw, disjointed must'ring; feeble wrath!
A war of waters borne against the rock
Of our firm continent, to fume, and chafe,
And shiver in the toil.

Gust. Mistaken man!
I come impower'd, and strengthen'd in thy weakness.
For tho' the structure of a tyrant's throne
Rise on the necks of half the suff'ring world;
Fear trembles in the cement:

Christ. Gustavus, would'st thou yet return to grace,
And hold thy motions in the sphere of duty,
Acceptance might be found.

Gust. Imperial spoiler!
Give me my father, give me back my kindred,
Give me the fathers of ten thousand orphans,
Give me the sons, in whom thy ruthless sword
Has left our widows childless: mine they were,
Both mine, and ev'ry Swede's, whose patriot breast
Bleeds in his country's woundings! O thou canst not!
Give me then,
My all that's left, my gentle mother there,
And spare yon little trembler!

Christ. Yes, on terms
Of compact, and submission.

Gust. Ha! with thee?
Compact with thee! and mean'st thou for my country?
For Sweden! No—so hold my heart but firm,
Altho' it wring for't; tho' blood drop for tears,
And at the sight my straining eyes start forth——
They both shall perish first.
Christ. Slaves, do your office.
Gust. Hold yet,—Thou canst not be so damn'd as my mother!
I dare not ask thy blessing—Where's Arvida?
Where art thou? Come, my friend, thou'st known temptation—
And therefore best canst pity, or support me.
Arv. Alas! I shall but serve to weigh thee downward,
To pull thee from the dazzling, sightless height,
At which thy virtue soars. For, Oh, Gustavus,
My soul is dark, disconsolate and dark;
Sick to the world, and hateful to myself,
I have no country now; I've nought but thee,
And should yield up the int'rest of mankind,
Where thine's in question.
Aug. See, my son relents;
Behold, O king! yet spare us but a moment,
His little sister shall embrace his knees,
And these fond arms, around his duteous neck,
Shall join to bend him to us.
Christ. Could I trust ye——
Arv. I'll be your hostage!
Christ. Granted.
Gust. Hold, my friend.
[*Here* ARVIDA *breaks from* GUSTAVUS, *and passes to* CHRISTIERN'S *Party, while* AUGUSTA *and* GUSTAVA *go over to* GUSTAVUS.
Aug. Is it then giv'n, yet giv'n me, ere I die
To see thy face, Gustavus? thus to gaze,
To touch, to fold thee thus!—My son, my son!
And have I liv'd to this? It is enough.

All arm'd, and, in my country's precious cause,
Terribly beauteous, to behold thee thus!
Why, 'twas my only, hourly, suit to Heav'n,
And now 'tis granted. O my glorious child,
Bless'd were the throes I felt for thee, Gustavus!
For from the breast, from out your swathing bands
You stepp'd the child of honour.

Gust. O my mother!

Aug. Why stands that water trembling in thy eye?
Why heaves thy bosom? Turn not thus away,
'Tis the last time that we must meet, my child,
And I will have thee whole. Why, why, Gustavus,
Why is this form of heaviness? For me
I trust it is not meant; you cannot think
So poorly of me: I grow old, my son,
And to the utmost period of mortality,
I ne'er should find a death's hour like to this,
Whereby to do thee honour.

Gust. Roman patriots!
Ye Decii, self devoted to your country!
You gave no mothers up! Will annals yield
No precedent for this, no elder boast
Whereby to match my trial?

Aug. No, Gustavus;
For Heav'n still squares our trial to our strength,
And thine is of the foremost—Noble youth!
Ev'n I, thy parent, with a conscious pride,
Have often bow'd to thy superior virtues.
Oh, there is but one bitterness in death,
One only sting——

Gust. Speak, speak!

Aug. 'Tis felt for thee.
Too well I know thy gentleness of soul,
Melting as babes; ev'n now the pressure's on thee,
And bends thy loveliness to earth—Oh, child!
The dear but sad foretaste of thy affliction
Already kills thy mother—But behold,

Behold thy valiant followers, who to thee,
And to the faith of thy protecting arm
Have giv'n ten thousand mothers, daughters too;
Who in thy virtue yet may learn to bear
Millions of freeborn sons to bless thy name,
And pray for their deliverer—Oh farewell!
This, and but this, the very last, adieu!
Heav'n sit victorious on thy arm, my son!
And give thee to thy merits!

Christ. Ah, thou trait'ress!

Aug. See, Gustavus,
My little captive waits for one embrace.

Gust. Come to my arms, thou lamblike sacrifice;
Oh, that they were of force to fold thee ever,
To let thee to my heart! there lock thee close,
But 'twill not be!

Arv. Hear me, thou most dear Gustavus!
Thus low I bend my pray'r, reject me not:
If once, if ever thou didst love Arvida,
Oh leave me here to answer to the wrath
Of this fell tyrant. Save thy honour'd mother,
And that sweet lamb from slaughter!

Gust. Cruel friendship!

Christ. And by my life I'd take thee at thy word,
But that I know 'twould please thee.

Aug. No, gen'rous prince, thy blood shall never be
The price of our dishonour. Come, my child;
Weep not, sweet babe, there shall no harm come nigh thee.

Christ. 'Tis well, proud dame; you are return'd, I see——
Each to his charge—Here break we off, Gustavus;
For to the very teeth of thy rebellion
We dash defiance back.

Gust. Alas, my mother!
Grief chokes up utt'rance, else I have to say
What never tongue unfolded——Yet return,

Come back, and I will give up all to save thee;
Thou fountain of my life!
Dearer than mercy is to kneeling penitence,
My early blessing, first and latest joy;
Return, return, and save thy lost Gustavus!
Christ. No more, thou trifler!
Aug. Oh, farewell for ever!
[*Exeunt* CHRISTIERN *and his Party.* GUSTAVUS *and his Party remain.*
Gust. Then she is gone——Arvida! Anderson!
For ever gone——Arnoldus, friends, where are ye?
Help here, heave, heave this mountain from me—Oh—
Heav'n keep my senses!——So——We will to battle;
But let no banners wave——Be still, thou trump!
And ev'ry martial sound, that gives the war
To pomp or levity; for vengeance now
Is clad with heavy arms, sedately stern,
Resolv'd, but silent as the slaughter'd heaps
O'er which my soul is brooding.
Arn. O Gustavus!
Is there a Swede of us, whose sword and soul
Grapples not to thee, as to all they hold
Of earthly estimation? Said I more,
It were but half my thought.
And. On thee we gaze,
As one unknown till this important hour;
Preeminent of men!
Siv. Accurs'd be he,
Who, in thy leading, will not fight, and strive,
And bleed, and gasp with pleasure!
And. We are thine.
Arn. Tho', to yield us up,
Had scarce been less than virtue.
Gust. O my friends!
I see, 'tis not for man to boast his strength
Before the trial comes——This very hour,
Had I a thousand parents, all seem'd light,

When weigh'd against my country; and but now,
One mother seem'd of weight to poize the world;
Tho' conscious truth and reason were against her.
For, Oh, howe'er the partial passions sway,
High Heav'n assigns but one unbiass'd way;
Direct thro' ev'ry opposition leads,
Where shelves decline, and many a steep impedes.
Here hold we on—tho' thwarting fiends alarm,
Here hold we on—tho' devious syrens charm;
In Heav'n's disposing pow'r events unite,
Nor aught can happen wrong to him, who acts aright.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

The Royal Tent, near the Field of Battle.

Enter CHRISTINA *and* MARIANA.

Christina. Hark! Mariana, list!—No—all is silent—
It was not fancy, sure—didst thou not hear?
Mar. Too plain, the voice of terror seiz'd my ear,
And my heart sinks within me.
Christina. Oh, I fear
The war is now at work—As winds, methought,
Long born thro' hollow vaults, the sound approach'd;
One sound, yet laden with a thousand notes
Of fearful variation; then it swell'd
To distant shouts, now coming on the gale;

Again borne backward with a parting groan,
All sunk to horrid stillness.

Enter LAERTES.

Laer. Christina, fly! thou royal virgin,
This morn beheld thee mistress of the north,
Bright heir of Scandinavia; and this hour
Has left thee not, throughout thy wide dominions,
Whereon to rest thy foot.

Christina. Now, praise to Heav'n!
Say but my father lives!

Laer. At your command
I went: and, from a neighb'ring summit, view'd
Where either host stood adverse, sternly wedg'd;
Reflecting on each other's gloomy front,
Fell hate and fix'd defiance—When at once
The foe mov'd on, attendant to the steps
Of their Gustavus—He, with mournful pace,
Came slow and silent; till two hapless Danes
Prick'd forth, and on his helm discharg'd their fury:
Then rous'd the lion! To my wond'ring sight
His stature grew twofold, before his eye
All force seem'd wither'd, and his horrid plume
Shook wild dismay around; as Heav'n's dread bolt
He shot, he pierc'd our legions; in his strength
His shouting squadron gloried, rushing on
Where'er he led their battle—Full five times,
Hemm'd by our mightier host, the foe seem'd lost,
And swallow'd from my sight; five times again,
Like flame they issued to the light—And thrice
These eyes beheld him, they beheld Gustavus
Unhors'd, and by a host girt singly in;
And thrice he broke thro' all.

Christina. My blood runs chill.

Laer. With such a strenuous, such a labour'd conflict,
Sure never field was fought! until Gustavus
Aloud cry'd, Victory! and on his spear

High rear'd th' imperial diadem of Denmark;
Then slack'd the battle; then recoil'd our host;
His, echo'd, Victory! and now would know
No bounds; rout follow'd, and the face of fight——
She heeds me not.

Christina. O, ill starr'd royalty!
My father! cruel, dear, unhappy father!
Summon'd so sudden! fearful, fearful thought!

Enter CHRISTIERN, *flying without his Helmet, in Disorder, his Sword broke, and his Garments bloody; he throws away his Sword.*

Christ. Give us new arms of proof—fresh horses—quick!
A watch without there—Set a standard up
To guide our scatter'd powers! Haste, my friends, haste!
We must be gone—O for some cooling stream,
To slake a monarch's thirst!

Laer. A post, my liege,
A second post from Denmark, says——

Christ. All's lost.
Is it not so? Be gone,
Give me a moment's solitude—Thought, thought,
Where wou'dst thou lead?

Christina. He sees me not—Alas, alas, my father!
O, what a war there lives within his eye!
Where greatness struggles to survive itself.
I tremble to approach him; yet I fain
Would bring peace to him—Don't you know me, sir?

Christ. My child!

Christina. I am.

Christ. Curse me, then! curse me! join with Heav'n and earth
And Hell, to curse!

Christina. Patience and peace
Possess thy mind! Not all thy pride of empire
E'er gave such bless'd sensations, as one hour

Of penitence, tho' painful—Let us hence—
Far from the blood and bustle of ambition.
Be it my task to watch thy rising wish,
To smooth thy brow, find comfort for thy cares,
And for thy will, obedience; still to cheer
The day with smiles, and lay the nightly down
Beneath thy slumbers.

Christ. Oh! thou all that's left me!
Ev'n in the riot, in the rage of fight,
Thy guardian virtues watch'd around my head,
When else no arm could aid—for thro' my ranks,
My circling troops, the fell Gustavus rush'd;
Vengeance! he cry'd, and with one eager hand
Grip'd fast my diadem—his other arm,
High rear'd the deathful steel——suspended yet;
For in his eye, and thro' his varying face,
Conflicting passions fought—he look'd—he stood
In wrath reluctant—then, with gentler voice;
Christina, thou hast conquer'd! Go, he cry'd,
I yield thee to her virtues. [*Exeunt.*

Enter GUSTAVUS, ANDERSON, ARNOLDUS, SIVARD, *&c. in Triumph.* GUSTAVUS *advances, and the rest range themselves on each Side of the Stage.*

Gust. That we have conquer'd, first we bend to Heav'n!

And. And the next to thee!

All. To thee, to thee, Gustavus!

Gust. No, matchless men! my brothers of the war!
Be it my greatest glory to have mix'd
My arms with yours, and to have fought for once
Like to a Dalecarlian; like to you,
The sires of honour, of a new born fame.
To be transmitted, from your great memorial,
To climes unknown, to age succeeding age,
Till time shall verge upon eternity,

And patriots be no more——
Arn. Behold, my lord,
The Danish pris'ners, and the traitor Peterson,
Attend their fate.
Gust. Send home the Danes with honour,
And let them better learn, from our example,
To treat whom next thy conquer, with humanity.
And. But then, for Peterson?
Gust. His crimes are great;
A single death were a reward for treason;
Let him still languish—Let him be exil'd,
No more to see the land of liberty,
The hills of Sweden, nor the native fields
Of known, endear'd, Idea.
And. Royal sir,
This is to pardon, to encourage, villains;
And hourly to expose that sacred life,
Where all our safety centres.
Gust. Fear them not.
The fence of virtue is a chief's best caution;
And the firm surety of my people's hearts
Is all the guard that e'er shall wait Gustavus.
I am a soldier from my youth;
Trust me, my friend,
Except in such a cause as this day's quarrel,
I would not shed a single wretch's blood,
For the world's empire!
Arn. O exalted Sweden!
Bless'd people! Heaven! wherein have we deserv'd
A man like this to rule us?

Enter ARVIDA, *leading in* CHRISTINA—*he runs to* GUSTAVUS.

Gust. My Arvida!
Arv. My King! O hail! Thus let me pay my homage. [*Kneels.*

Christina. Renown'd Gustavus! Mightiest among men!
If such a wretch, the captive of my arms,
Trembling and aw'd in thy superior presence,
May find the grace, that ev'ry other finds,
For thou art said to be of wond'rous goodness!
Then hear, and Oh, excuse a foe's presumption,
While low, thus low you see a suppliant ehild
Now pleading for a father; for a dear,
Much lov'd, if cruel, yet unhappy father.
If he with circling nations could not stand,
Against thee single; singly, what can he
When thou art fenc'd with nations?

Gust. Ha! that posture!
Oh, rise——surpris'd, my eye perceiv'd it not.
I've much to say, but that my tongue, my thoughts
Are troubled; warr'd on by unusual passions.
'Twas hence thou hadst it in thy power to ask
Ere I could offer—Come, my friend, assist,
Instruct me to be grateful. O Christina,
I fought for freedom, not for crowns, thou fair one,
They shall sit brighter on that beauteous head,
Whose eye might awe the monarchs of the earth,
And light the world to virtue——My Arvida!

Arv. I read thy soul, I see the gen'rous conflict,
And come to fix, not trouble, thy repose.
Could you but know with what an eager haste
I sprung to execute thy late commands;
To shield this lovely object of thy cares,
And give her thus, all beauteous to thy eyes!
For I've no bliss but thine, have lost the form
Of ev'ry wish that's foreign to thy happiness.

Gust. Alas! your cheek is pale—you bleed, my brother!

Arv. I do indeed—to death.

Gust. You have undone me:
Rash, headstrong man! Oh, was this well, Arvida?
[Turns from him.

Arv. Pardon, Gustavus! mine's the common lot,
The fate of thousands fall'n this day in battle.
I had resolv'd on life, to see you bless'd;
To see my king and his Christina happy.
Turn, thou belov'd, thou honour'd next to Heav'n,
And to thy arms receive a penitent,
Who never more shall wrong thee.

Gust. O Arvida!
Friend! Friend! [*Embraces him.*

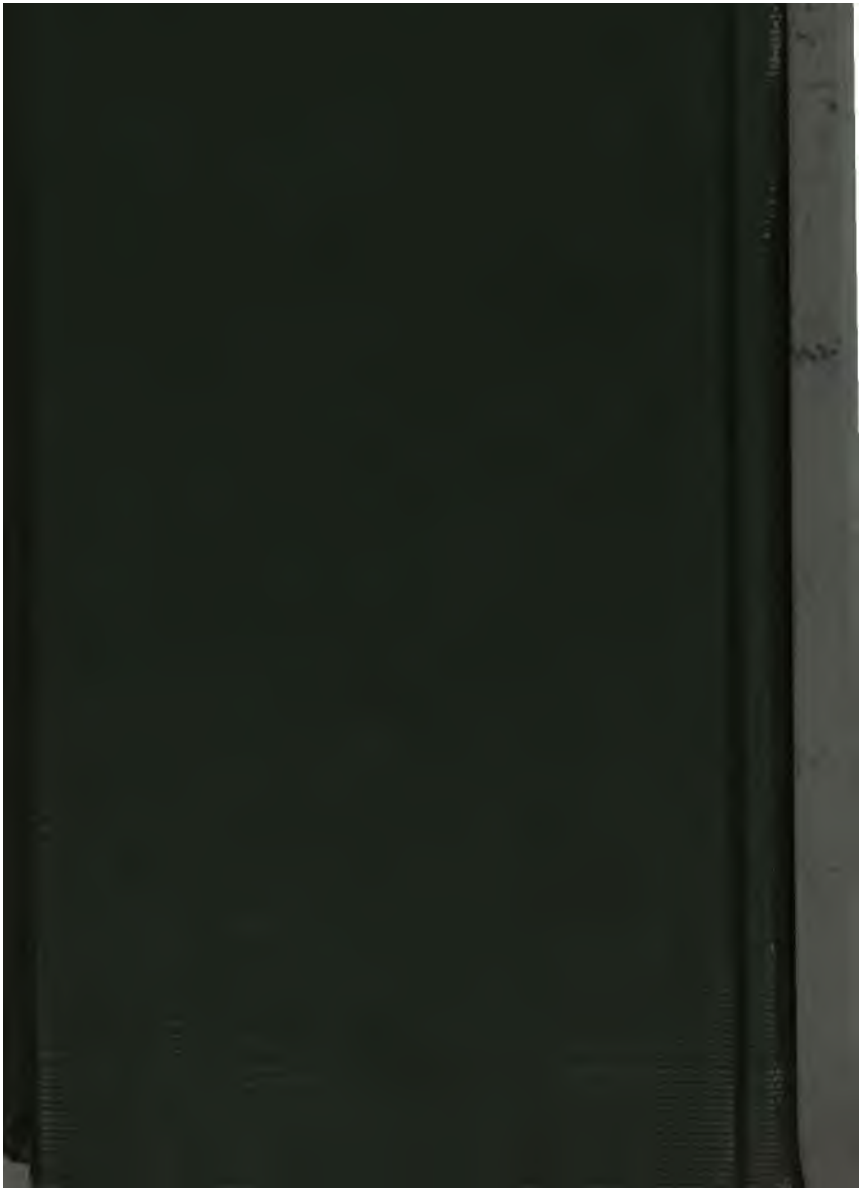
Arv. Thy heart beats comfort to me! in this breast,
Let thy Arvida, let thy friend survive.
Oh, strip his once lov'd image of its frailties,
And strip it too of ev'ry fonder thought,
That may give thee affliction——Do, Gustavus;
It is my last request; for Heav'n and thou
Art all the care, and business——of Arvida. [*Dies.*

Gust. Wou'dst thou too leave me?
Not if the heart, the arms of thy Gustavus,
Have force to hold thee.

Christina. O delightful notes!
That I do love thee, yes, 'tis true, my lord.
The bond of virtue, friendship's sacred tie,
The lover's pains, and all the sister's fondness;
But I have a father,
If cruel, yet a father:
Abandon'd now by ev'ry supple wretch,
That fed his years with flattery. I am all
That's left to calm, to sooth, his troubled soul
To penitence, to virtue. [*Exit.*

[GUSTAVUS *looks after* CHRISTINA, *then turns and looks on* ARVIDA—ANDERSON, ARNOLDUS, *&c. advance.*

Gust. Come, come, my brothers all! Yes, I will strive
To be the sum of every title to ye,
And you shall be my sire, my friend reviv'd,

My sister, mother, all that's kind and dear;
For so Gustavus holds ye——Oh, I will
Of private passions all my soul divest,
And take my dearer country to my breast.
To public good transfer each fond desire,
And clasp my Sweden, with a lover's fire.
Well pleas'd, the weight of all her burdens bear;
Dispense all pleasure, but engross all care.
Still quick to find, to feel, my people's woes,
And wake, that millions may enjoy repose.

THE END.